



Greater Hartford Legal Aid

To: Committee on Housing
From: David A. Pels
Re: Raised Bill No. 5371

I urge the Committee on Housing to reject Raised Bill No. 5371 because it would alter the current crucial requirements for the replacement of demolished public housing.

Under current law the consent of the Commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) is needed for the demolition of public housing. DECD currently can grant consent under limited conditions designed to ensure that: the demolition is in the best interests of the municipality; there is an adequate supply of low or moderate income housing; residents are involved in planning and; displaced persons receive comparable housing and relocation assistance. All of these protections would be replaced by a three year "pilot" program that only requires the replacement of one unit for every two that are demolished.

I represented the tenants at Westbrook Village and Bowles Park in Hartford during the latest attempt to redevelop those premises. The tenants were always very clear that in order for them to support redevelopment they had to be involved in the planning process; all displaced residents had to receive comparable replacement housing and the lost units had to be fully replaced.

The adoption of this bill would lead to a lower supply of housing for low and moderate income persons at a time when there is no evidence to suggest the need for such housing has decreased. It would also eliminate the important role that the residents now play in the development of housing in their communities.

Raised Bill No. 5371 should be rejected.

Greater Hartford Legal Aid, Inc.

999 Asylum Avenue, 3Fl. Hartford, CT 06105-2465 • Tel: 860. 541. 5000 • Fax: 860. 541.5050 • TTY: 860. 541.5069 • www.ghla.org

