

# The Connecticut General Assembly

Senator Toni N. Harp – 10<sup>th</sup> District



Good morning Senator LeBeau, Representative Berger, Ranking Members and all who serve on the Commerce Committee. I have testimony from Senator Toni Harp in strong support of HB5040, An Act Authorizing Bonds of the State for Traffic Calming and Economic Development in Westville Village.

Senator Harp urges your favorable consideration of this bill.

The Westville section of New Haven boasts a thriving business district quite removed from well-known downtown landmarks like Yale's main campus and the New Haven Green. Westville has an eclectic combination of retail stores and restaurants, antique shops, boutiques, art galleries and studios, with many of them housed in historic buildings with intricate facades.

This shopping district is extremely well-positioned, less than a half-mile from Southern Connecticut State University and otherwise

surrounded by densely populated, stable, residential neighborhoods. Westville developed at the hub of urban streets and arteries – at a crossroads with vehicular and mass transit access to downtown New Haven to the south, Hamden to the north, and surrounding neighborhoods and residential areas.

The trouble with an inviting retail district in this ideal – if busy – location is the way it attracts speeding cars and trucks. In fact, in a 2009 analysis of what’s necessary for Westville revitalization, the first thing listed under ‘Special Challenges’ is ‘high traffic speeds;’ the second is ‘pedestrian safety.’

These concerns prompt HB5040, to authorize bonding over time that will underwrite improvements in Westville consistent with the state’s Main Street Investment program. More specifically, these funds will be used to improve street lighting, accentuate crosswalks in this vibrant neighborhood, and use so-called curb ‘bump-outs’ to moderate traffic and keep it moving at slower speeds that are more appropriate for pedestrians and bicyclists.

The Westville section of New Haven is framed along its eastern flank by the magnificent West Rock, complementing its desirable man-made attributes with an all-natural, geologically significant aesthetic appeal. At the same time, the area's best features are without question its residents and business owners, who work tirelessly to make everyone feel welcome whether they live there or simply stop in to visit or shop.

This district has a special place in our city; it seems at once charmed and protected by West Rock, has ready access to beautiful Edgewood Park and the dazzling new campus at Southern Connecticut State University, and boasts a thriving, welcoming business district.

Your favorable consideration of HB5040 will help us underscore what many of us have known for years already, namely, that in our Westville Village we have a jewel in our midst in terms of a vibrant community with person-to-person appeal. The public safety and security features in this bill are absolutely necessary, and will help perpetuate Westville's reputation as a desirable New Haven address for businesses and residents alike.

Thank you very much.

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