



CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF
REALTORS[®] INC.

Statement on

Raised S.B. 238 An Act Expanding The Learn Here, Live Here Program

SUPPORT

Submitted to the Committee on Higher Education and Employment Advancement

Thursday, March 8, 2012

By Timothy Calnen, Vice President Government Affairs

Connecticut Association of REALTORS®, Inc.

On behalf of the 15,000 members of the Connecticut Association of REALTORS® we submit this testimony in support of S.B. 238 An Act Expanding The Learn Here, Live Here Program.

The “Learn Here, Live Here Program” was signed into law by Governor Malloy as part of the “Majority Leader’s Job Growth Roundtable Act” (Public Act 11-140) which authorized the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development in consultation with the Commissioner of Revenue Services to establish the “Learn Here, Live Here” program. This well intentioned program is designed to assist graduates of a public institution of higher education in this state, who qualify as in-state students and paid the in-state tuition rates or graduate from a regional vocational-technical school in purchasing their first home in the state. Qualifying graduates may have their income tax liability, up to an annual maximum of \$2,500 placed in the “learn here, live here account”. After a period of not more than 10 years after graduation the amount may be withdrawn for the purchase of a first home in the state.

The benefits of this program are numerous. Students are encouraged to attain higher education resulting in better employment opportunities. Adding to Connecticut’s skilled workforce will assist in attracting new employers and meeting the labor needs of employers currently in the State. The program will result in more graduates remaining in Connecticut contributing to the State’s economy. The purchase of a first home benefits the family buying the home, the community in which the home is located and results in economic multipliers derived from the transaction. Stemming the so called “brain drain” can do nothing but improve Connecticut’s economic future.

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Raised Bill No. 238 changes the segregated account's name established under the program from "the Connecticut first time homebuyers account" to "the Learn Here, Live Here account". More importantly the bill increases the maximum limit from all program participants in any one calendar year from one to ten million dollars.

A related bill, SB 78 An Act Concerning The Learn Here, Live Here Program, was the subject of a hearing by the Commerce Committee on February 21, 2012. The program adoption, as initially enacted, is "permissive" in that as noted in line 6 of RB 238 "The Commissioner of Economic and Community Development...MAY establish the Learn Here, Live Here Program." SB78 proposes to change the word "may" to "shall" thus assuring the establishment of the Live Here, Learn Here Program. This change is supported by the Association.

SB 78 also expands the educational institutions qualifying under the Learn Here, Live Here Program to include private universities or colleges or health care training schools. We commend this expansion however we would not want to see this bill fail if that expansion is determined to be a fiscal problem. The expanded language is meritorious, but only if it does not hamper the program's start up during these fiscally challenging times.

In conclusion, the establishment of the Learn Here, Live Here program will provide significant returns on the "investment" in terms of retaining Connecticut's youth, job retention and growth and improved overall economy in Connecticut.

Thank you. Are there any questions?

