

**March 19, 2013**

**TO:** The Commerce Committee,

Senator Gary Le Beau and Representative Chris Perone, co-chairmen

**FROM:** Linda Feczko

**RE:** Raised Bill #1131

Good afternoon, Senator LeBeau, Representative Perone, and members of the Commerce Committee.

My name is Linda Feczko and I am a board member of Connecticut Preservation Action, the Milford Preservation Trust and the Bridgeport Community Historical Society. I am also a resident and home owner in New Haven, and former resident of both Milford and Bridgeport.

Today I am speaking both as a CPA member and Connecticut resident, in support of raised bill #1131, An Act Concerning Changes to the Connecticut Historic Home Tax Credit.

This bill can only serve to enhance and expand an already successful Historic Home Tax Credit program that creates rehabilitation of historic structures, as well as additional housing options, for many constituents throughout the state.

Speaking as a preservationist, maintaining the integrity of the many beautiful homes in the current targeted areas of our state, through revitalization and rehabilitation under this program, creates a sense of place that is uniquely Connecticut's.

For too many years, while growing up in Bridgeport, I saw far too many beautiful old homes as well as much viable housing stock, that might have been saved and revitalized, just bulldozed away.

Conversely, in recent years, I have also seen many homes in New Haven revitalized, under the Historic Home Tax Credit program, giving new life to the homes as well as an important sense of pride in the neighborhoods—much of which, at an earlier point in time, would have been subject to demolition.

Unfortunately, under the current language of the program, many home owners have been left out, while also hit by the economic downturn of recent years. Some are located in communities, such as Milford, that are not currently eligible for the tax credit program.

Milford is just one of many beautiful Connecticut communities that has pride of place, and has maintained and preserved much of its historic heritage. Many owners of historic homes in these non-eligible communities, however, would be able to do much more to help preserve

their communities' heritage, if the eligibility requirements of this program were expanded to be more inclusive.

Speaking as a home owner with a home in a historic district in an urban area, in which some home owners have restored their homes, the current economic climate has also created hardships for many in lower income brackets—many of whom would otherwise be willing to restore their homes as well. Many, however, cannot meet the current requirement of \$25K—which is indeed a loss for a neighborhood and ultimately for the state.

The changes in the tax credit program language, and in particular, the reduction of \$25K to \$15K in qualified rehabilitation expenditures, I believe will be an important component in the decision and ability of many owners in urban communities to restore their homes. Myself included.

A revitalized neighborhood, along with that renewed sense of place, often brings more long-term economic durability. And making the program more feasible for nonprofits to use—including the change to a 50K credit per unit for nonprofit corporations, under the proposed language outlined in bill #1131—again, can only enhance revitalization of a neighborhood, as well as help to create additional much needed housing for many.

I urge you to support the changes to the successful Historic Home Tax Credit Program, in Bill #1131, which will make it more accessible to many, and to keep the heritage of Connecticut communities alive.

Thank you for your time.

Linda Feczko

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