

## *Support H.B. 6574—An Act Establishing A Task Force To Consider Impediments To Fair Housing Choice*

### *Support the Creation of a Taskforce to Overcome Barriers to Fair Housing Choice!*

#### **What are the barriers to fair housing choice?**

- A barrier to fair housing choice is any law, regulation, policy, or procedure that prevents people from obtaining the housing of their choice regardless of their race, national origin, disability, the presence of children or other status protected by the anti-discrimination laws.
- A barrier or impediment can be explicit like a landlord who says “no kids” or less obvious like a town refusing to permit a developer to build housing with more than two bedrooms which might also prevent families with kids from moving into town.

#### **What barriers to fair housing choice exist in Connecticut?**

Connecticut is about to complete an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI) which will examine all of the forces that influence Connecticut’s housing market and list any impediments or barriers to housing choice. Once it is complete, DECD is required to submit this report to the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

#### **Why is the AI important?**

- (1) Receipt of Federal Housing Funding Depends on the Proper Implementation of the AI’s Recommendations.** Connecticut can only receive federal housing funding for programs like Community Development Block Grant, HOME funds, and federal shelter grants if it produces a comprehensive AI and addresses any of the issues raised. In the last five years, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has withheld or threatened to withhold federal funding from places like St. Bernard’s Parish, LA, the state of Texas, and Sussex County, DE.
- (2) The AI is a Valuable Planning Tool.** Information provided in the AI, such as aspects of government programs that may unwittingly prevent people from living where they choose, is critical to proper planning at a municipal, regional and statewide basis.

#### **Why do we need a Taskforce?**

The recommendations of the AI need to be considered and, in some cases, integrated into State planning documents such as the Consolidated Plan and the Plan of Conservation and Development. A thoughtful group of agency representatives and experts in a range of areas is needed to complete this task.





**Connecticut  
Fair Housing Center**

**TESTIMONY OF ERIN KEMPLE  
OF THE CONNECTICUT FAIR HOUSING CENTER  
IN SUPPORT OF H.B. 6574  
CREATING A TASK FORCE TO  
CONSIDER IMPEDIMENTS TO FAIR HOUSING CHOICE  
March 18, 2013**

Senator Cassano, Representative Rojas, Senator Fason, and Representative Aman and members of the Committee thank you for the opportunity to address you today. My name is Erin Kemple. I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Fair Housing Center. My agency is a private non-profit that works to address housing discrimination and integration issues in Connecticut.

The Connecticut Fair Housing Center supports this bill which would create a task force to make recommendations to overcome the barriers to fair housing choice. A barrier to fair housing is any law, regulation, policy, or procedure that prevents people from obtaining the housing of their choice regardless of membership in a protected class. An impediment can be explicit like a landlord policy that says “no kids” or less obvious like a town refusing to permit a developer to build housing with more than two bedrooms. A practical result of impediments is that people are prevented from moving into neighborhoods with high performing schools with access to jobs, transportation and quality medical care. This results in both racial and national origin segregation as well as preventing other people protected from discrimination like families with children and people with disabilities from moving into housing that they want. Recent studies reveal levels of Black/White segregation in our three major metropolitan areas of Bridgeport,

New Haven and Hartford that are higher than in places like Atlanta, Georgia, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and Little Rock, Arkansas

Currently, the Center is working with the Department of Economic and Community Development to write the HUD-mandated Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI). HUD requires state and local governments receiving funding through such programs as the Community Development Block Grant, HOME, Emergency Shelter Grant, and other federal housing funding to create an AI as a condition of continuing to receive funding. The AI will include a review of Connecticut's laws, regulations, and administrative policies, procedures, and practices affecting the location, availability, and accessibility of housing, as well as an assessment of conditions, both public and private, affecting fair housing choice. Once this data is gathered, the AI will then identify impediments or barriers to fair housing choice. HUD also requires that the AI include recommendations for addressing the impediments to fair housing and implementing action steps to overcome these barriers.

The State of Connecticut needs to coordinate and plan how to overcome impediments to fair housing. For example, large cities and towns have different impediments and more resources to address fair housing issues than smaller cities and very small towns. Without planning and input from all of the entities who play a role in Connecticut's housing market, it is impossible to create workable solutions to a very difficult problem. Recently I met with more than 100 administrators of small cities in Connecticut to get their input on the impediments to fair housing. Their feedback made clear that while many city and town administrators support fair housing and would like their communities to be more diverse and inclusive, the path to overcoming barriers will take a different route than the paths chosen by larger communities. This Task Force would give both large and small communities a voice in this process.

In addition to my written testimony, I have submitted some suggestions to add areas of expertise to the task force membership. By appointing volunteer experts in many different areas all of whom are committed to finding ways to overcome the barriers to housing choice, the task force will be able to consider and recommend actions that are cost-effective, and coordinate with other housing policies being implemented on a state-wide and local basis.



General Assembly

***Raised Bill No. 6574***

*January Session, 2013*

LCO No. 3808

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Referred to Committee on PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Introduced by:

(PD)

***AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO CONSIDER  
IMPEDIMENTS TO FAIR HOUSING CHOICE.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a task force to consider legislative solutions to address impediments to fair housing choice.

(b) The task force shall consist of the following members:

(1) The chairpersons and ranking members of the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to planning and development and housing, or their designees, who may be members of the General Assembly;

(2) Two appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives who shall include an expert in fair housing and an expert in affordable housing development and subsidized housing programs;

(3) Two appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate who shall include a demographer with an expertise in analyses of impediments and an expert in Connecticut zoning laws ;

(4) One appointed by the majority leader of the House of Representatives who shall be an expert in health equity;

(5) Two appointed by the majority leader of the Senate who shall include an expert in educational equity and an expert in strategies for expanding the availability of affordable and mixed income housing;

(6) One appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives who shall represent municipal housing authorities;

(7) One appointed by the minority leader of the Senate who shall be an expert in regional planning;

(8) The Commissioner of Housing, or the commissioner's designee; and

(9) The Commissioner of Economic and Community Development, or the commissioner's designee.

(c) Any member of the task force appointed under subdivision (2), (3), (4), (5), (6) or (7) of subsection (b) of this section may be a member of the General Assembly.

(d) All appointments to the task force shall be made not later than thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy shall be filled by the appointing authority.

(e) The speaker of the House of Representatives and the president pro tempore of the Senate shall select the chairpersons of the task force,

from among the members of the task force. Such chairpersons shall schedule the first meeting of the task force, which shall be held not later than sixty days after the effective date of this section.

(f) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to planning and development shall serve as administrative staff of the task force.

(g) Not later than February 5, 2014, the task force shall submit a report on its findings and recommendations to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to planning and development and housing, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes. The task force shall terminate on the date that it submits such report or February 5, 2014, whichever is later.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section

**Statement of Purpose:**

To establish a task force to consider legislative solutions to address impediments to fair housing choice.

