



March 18, 2013

Testimony to The Planning & Development Committee by David Fink, Policy Director, Partnership for Strong Communities

Senator Cassano, Representative Rojas and Distinguished Members of the Committee,

I am David Fink, policy director for The Partnership for Strong Communities, a statewide housing policy organization that does research and advocates for supportive housing to end homelessness, affordable and mixed-income housing in all communities of Connecticut and state-of-the-art solutions to effective community development.

I am here to support HB6574 because we believe this legislature and this state would benefit from a task force exploration of why barriers to affordable housing exist in many -- too many -- communities across the state.

The fact is that state law and policy seeks to create affordable housing in every municipality. Yet, according to DECD, 139 of Connecticut's 169 cities and towns have no affordable housing to speak of. In fact, there is a strong correlation between the 30 municipalities that have a significant amount of affordable housing and school districts that are overburdened and communities that lack many necessary resources. Largely because those low- and moderate-income families have so little choice of schools and neighborhoods that will be best for their children, Connecticut suffers from the largest achievement gap in the nation and many other related problems.

There are many possible reasons why the 139 cities and towns have little to no affordable housing: the wrong zoning, inadequate infrastructure, a lack of experience, knowledge or capacity, or a lack of will. Do communities purposely exclude low- and moderate-income residents? We all have our own opinions. This task force is necessary to find the real reasons and devise solutions.

We hope you will vote to create this task force to examine an issue that is central to the individual opportunity and economic growth this state must foster. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.