



OLR RESEARCH REPORT

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QUESTIONS FOR DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING COMMISSIONER NOMINEE

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DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING (DOH) (CGS § [8-37r](#))

- DOH is the state's lead agency responsible for all housing matters and is located within the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) for administrative purposes only.
- The commissioner is responsible for (1) all aspects of state housing policy, development, redevelopment, preservation, maintenance, and improvement of the state's housing stock and (2) developing strategies to encourage housing provision in the state, including for very low-, low-, and moderate-income families.
- In consultation with the 13-member Interagency Council on Affordable Housing, the commissioner must review the organization and delivery of state housing programs to plan and implement DOH.

QUESTIONS

1. PA 12-1, June Special Session (JSS), established DOH, making it DECD's successor with respect to its housing-related functions, powers, and duties (including community development, redevelopment, and urban renewal). As the first DOH commissioner, you would essentially be responsible for establishing the new department from the ground up. What qualifies you to lead this effort? In your career, have you created a new organization?
2. What's your vision for the department and how do you plan to achieve it? What would be the first few steps you would take in establishing DOH?
3. The state had a Department of Housing that the General Assembly merged with the Department of Economic Development in 1995 to establish DECD. Why is it appropriate or necessary to establish another independent housing department? Why is now the right time?
4. PA 12-1, JSS, also established the Interagency Council on Affordable Housing to advise and assist the DOH commissioner in planning and implementing the department. How do you envision working with the council?
5. The council submitted its first report to the General Assembly on January 15, 2013. Among other things, the report recommends transferring from four other agencies to DOH nearly 70 state housing programs. How will DOH effectuate these transfers? What barriers, if any, do you anticipate encountering?
6. Do you anticipate transferring to DOH all the programs that the council recommends? Will current staff transfer? Considering the different housing areas these programs and staff cover, how will you organize the department?
7. The Interagency Council on Affordable Housing's report recommends a vision, mission statement, and roles for DOH. Do you agree with these recommendations?
8. The council's report also suggests that (1) DOH should take a lead role in working with municipalities to enhance local

affordable housing opportunities and (2) the first step should involve reviewing and assessing zoning laws in all 169 municipalities. What is your response to this recommendation?

9. DOH will be the lead agency responsible for housing, but the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) appears to have some similar responsibilities. Will CHFA and DOH provide any of the same services? How will you work with CHFA in the short- and long-term?
10. Other than lack of funding, what do you consider to be the greatest challenges to increasing the state's affordable housing stock?
11. Has the state's supply of affordable housing increased since the Affordable Housing Land Use Appeals Procedure (CGS § [8-30g](#)) was enacted in 1990? Where has this housing been built? Has it kept pace with demand? The Housing Committee is considering several bills that would amend the procedure. What changes, if any, would you like to see made?
12. Which housing programs have been most effective and why in creating housing opportunities for Connecticut's low- and moderate-income minority households? What are your ideas for improving the current programs or creating new ones?
13. What is the connection between affordable housing and educational attainment? What about career advancement?
14. Senior housing projects continue to report tensions between elderly and non-elderly tenants who have disabilities, particularly those recovering from alcohol and drug abuse or suffering from mental illness. The Housing Committee is considering two bills (SB 336 and SB 337) that would allocate 86% of units in a senior housing project to elderly residents, and 14% of units to non-elderly residents with disabilities. What are your thoughts on these proposals?
15. What types of housing-related programs or incentives could the state offer to young professionals to encourage them to live in Connecticut's urban centers?

KS/JSB:tjo