



Evonne M. Klein
Commissioner

Department of Housing

Connecticut
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WRITTEN TESTIMONY FOR THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE 3/21/14

Evonne Klein, Commissioner
Department of Housing

Senator Osten, Representative Rojas and members of the committee. My name is Evonne Klein and I am the Commissioner of the Department of Housing (DOH). Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding House Bill 5582 and Senate Bill 436.

DOH Opposes House Bill 5582:

House Bill 5582 would require DOH to review state housing regulations for compliance with state and federal fair housing laws. It further mandates DOH to submit a report regarding this review to the Housing Committee by January 1, 2015. DOH opposes House Bill 5582 because it is unnecessary. The department understands the importance of such a review and has already conducted a preliminary assessment of these regulations and committed to the process of amending these regulations this year. In accordance with Executive Order No. 37, DOH reviewed all of the regulations under its jurisdiction and submitted a report of such review to the Governor's office in February. Within this report's implementation plan, DOH explains that our first priority is to amend several of our regulations to reflect current fair housing policies. In addition, DOH signed a Voluntary Compliance Agreement with the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to commence and diligently proceed with the process of updating our regulations to comply with current fair housing laws. House Bill 5582 simply adds the burden of another reporting requirement.

DOH Supports House Bill 436:

DOH supports Senate Bill 436, which would expand municipalities' authority to provide tax abatements for housing developments to include mixed-income developments where at least twenty per cent of dwelling units are designated for low or moderate-income persons or families. DOH strongly encourages the development of mixed-income housing through our funding initiatives and conversations with stakeholders. Mixed-income housing contributes to the long-term sustainability of affordable housing developments and strengthens our state's vibrant, diverse communities. Segregating low-income individuals by concentrating housing solely dedicated to their income tier in dense urban areas or in the outskirts of suburban communities is not acceptable. Incentives, such as the tax abatements proposed in this bill, create opportunities for housing developments that provide low- to moderate-income individuals and families with access to quality schools, safe streets, public transit and employment opportunities.