

Dear Legislative members:

I am writing in strong support of HB 6572.

I had the privilege of being assistant director of the National Commission on Urban Problems half a century ago. Commission Chair Paul H. Douglas, an eminent economist and highly regarded Illinois legislator (known as the "conscience of the Senate"), concluded that one of the most important things cities could do to help themselves and their citizens was to modernize their property tax.

The measure before you will do that. It is called a land value tax. This sounds like a new tax. Not so. We already tax land values. Taxing land values has been a positive feature of the property tax since the nation's founding. What is new is to get rid of -- or to greatly reduce -- the harmful part of the property tax, namely the tax on homes, commercial buildings and industrial structures. Taxing improvements on sites discourage their construction and upkeep, reducing economic activity. This leads to lost wages, lost profits and lost revenue for local governments.

Extending the time for Connecticut to conduct pilot projects with a modernized property tax that is pro-labor, pro-business, and pro-homeowner is a winning formula that will serve your state well. I have studied cities that pioneered in this approach and can report that they have had remarkable success.

Thanks for considering my testimony. With appreciation for your important legislative service.

Sincerely,

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