



CONNECTICUT REALTORS®

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Statement on

H.B. 5278, AN ACT CONCERNING AUTOMATIC FIRE EXTINGUISHING SYSTEMS IN NEW RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS TO BE OCCUPIED BY TWO FAMILIES

OPPOSED

Submitted to the Public Safety and Security Committee
March 1, 2016

By Michael Barbaro
2017 State President
Connecticut REALTORS®

Good morning Senator Larson, Representative Dargan, ranking members Guglielmo and Zupkus and members of the committee. My name is Michael Barbaro and I am a REALTOR® and builder from the New Haven area and the 2017 President of the Connecticut REALTORS®.

This testimony is in opposition to ***HB 5278, AN ACT CONCERNING AUTOMATIC FIRE EXTINGUISHING SYSTEMS IN NEW RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS TO BE OCCUPIED BY TWO FAMILIES*** which would require mandatory sprinklers in two family residences, effective 2018.

If money were no object to all of those with a dream of homeownership, we would not need to testify. But the reality is that building a home or buying a home is the largest financial decision most of us will ever make. Sprinkler system costs are very expensive, especially when tied to municipal water supplies. These devices also require regular maintenance and malfunctions can damage property.

Building materials and design in home construction today provide improved safety from earlier years. Mandating the addition of many thousands of dollars to new home construction costs could drive those who would otherwise build a home in the existing home market where there will be no sprinklers and older construction materials for the sole reason that the sprinklers priced them out of

the building market. It does not however, prevent anyone from voluntarily purchasing a sprinkler system if additional system is wanted.

There's no question smoke detectors provide protections necessary to alert families and individuals of a fire; and current detector laws ensure working detectors are in homes at the time of transfer; or absent that, buyers receive fees that could be used to purchase detectors. Our Association spent considerable resources to provide public service announcements explaining the importance of both smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in 2013. Any buyer who believes the cost to add a sprinkler system to their new home is valuable to them continues to have the option to do that voluntarily.

We urge you to consider any new cost, especially a huge new cost, will damage Connecticut's already fragile real estate market. Any home that is not built costs construction and many other small businesses jobs that Connecticut desperately needs.

We do not support this bill. Thank you for allowing me to speak before you and I will try to answer any questions you may have.