



# City of Milford, Connecticut

- Founded in 1639 -

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## Testimony to the Housing Committee

### **COMMITTEE BILL NO. 535, "AN ACT REVISING THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING LAND USE APPEALS PROCESS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING APPLICATIONS AND OBTAINING A MUNICIPAL MORATORIUM."**

**February 16, 2017**

On behalf of the City of Milford, thank you for allowing me this opportunity to provide comments in strong support of the amendments to Section 8-30g of the Connecticut General Statutes through Committee Bill No. 535.

Milford is the Small City with a Big Heart. We are a working class community where 32.72% of our households are low and moderate-income, according to current HUD and Census Bureau data.

In order to ensure local affordability, Milford provides a diverse housing stock. Our city includes housing that is low income, affordable, and Section 8. We care for and maintain both scattered-site public housing and five significant public housing complexes. We have converted decommissioned schools and repurposed other public facilities to create senior and affordable housing. Milford is home to numerous manufactured mobile home parks that range in size from a development with six units to the 175 homes at Ryder Woods. Our housing market offers single and multi-family homes, condos, and apartments at, below, and well below the threshold of affordability identified by statute.

Milford's Zoning Regulations and Plan of Conservation and Development encourage affordable housing. In developing our community, progressive planners looked at our well-connected multi-modal transit system and other important factors in determining where our workforce housing and affordable housing would be most successful. Indeed, our local regulations call for affordable housing and multi-unit developments, as of right, in various zones including Corridor Design Development Districts - CDD1, CDD2, CDD4, CDD5, as well as the Open Space Affordable Housing Development Multi-Family District.

Milford has zoned for and developed a wide range of affordable housing as a testament to sound planning principles. Despite the breadth and depth of our affordability, Milford is not getting credit where proper credit is due. As a mature community dating back to 1639, many of our affordable properties were developed prior to the law's cut-off that only credits the affordable units that were deed restricted after 1990. This artificial statutory condition distorts the actual affordability of Milford's housing stock. Moreover, the present statutory formula creates an uneven playing field, making it difficult for certain mature Connecticut communities, like Milford, to qualify for a moratorium or exemption under CGS § 8-30g.

With this background, it should be clear that Milford has gone to great lengths to create affordable housing for young professionals, working families, and our senior population. And, while we wholeheartedly support the original intent of CGS § 8-30g – to provide housing to those whom wish to reside in, and be part of a community otherwise not affordable – our City has been afflicted by the unintended consequences of the well-intentioned legislation. Developers are circumventing and abusing carefully crafted, purposeful zoning regulations to maximize profits. These same unscrupulous developers ignore sound planning principles important to the success of towns and the State.

In order to help correct some of the flaws found in Connecticut's affordable housing law and bring greater consistency and fairness to the process, I respectfully ask this Committee to consider the common sense adjustments identified in Bill No. 535.

Again, thank you for your courtesy and consideration. I appreciate the dedication of this Committee and I urge you to continue your work of improving our housing laws to ensure that each Connecticut town has the necessary tools to develop into a world-class community where every citizen has the opportunity to live and prosper.

Respectfully Submitted,



Benjamin G. Blake