

**Testimony of Dianne Greco in Support of H.B. 7297, An Act Establishing a Private Right of Action in the Duty to Promote Fair Housing and Requiring a Study of Connecticut's Housing Inventory and Current and Future Housing Needs
Wednesday, March 22nd, 2017**

Good morning, Chairperson and Members of the Planning and Development Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Dianne Greco, and I am a registered voter in Marlborough, CT. I am testifying today in support of H.B. 7297.

I have lived in Marlborough for 7 years, but prior to that spent many years living and teaching in Boston and Washington D.C. While these areas are still segregated, they are more diverse, and that is one of their strengths.

Diversity brings great value to communities. It leads to economic growth, improved access to jobs, and creates vibrant communities. Students are better prepared for a diverse world, develop stronger academically, and have a greater cultural awareness when they grow up in mixed income environments. Connecticut has one of the greatest achievement gaps in the country, and segregation is largely to blame. By addressing housing segregation, we can begin to provide more equal educational opportunities to our children.

Additionally, in order for Marlborough to be a more thriving, welcoming community, we need more affordable housing and diversity in our town, and these measures would help facilitate that. I also want Connecticut to be a leader in fair housing policy, as it has been with other civil rights issues in the past.

H.B. 7297 provides an essential tool to allow our state to better plan for fair housing policy so that every resident has the opportunities they deserve. We need to take affirmative steps to address segregation in Connecticut, and H.B. 7297 is a small but mighty first step.