

## Testimony of Makaela Kingsley in Support of House Bill 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

My name is Makaela Kingsley. I am a current resident of Hamden, a past resident of Middletown and of New Haven, and a highly engaged citizen of Connecticut.

Today, I would like to address why it is critical for our state to pass HB7297.

Connecticut is one of the most racially- and economically-segregated states in the country. Suburbs are thriving, while lower income working families, disproportionately of color, are isolated in high poverty, struggling urban areas with no access to opportunity.

Research conclusively shows that where you live strongly influences your chances of success, including health, school achievement, and long-term well-being. For example, exposure to violent crime at an early age can impair a child's cognitive development and school performance. Conversely, children who move to low-poverty neighborhoods can cut the achievement gap in half in just a few years.

I have lived for sustained periods of time in three different neighborhoods in Connecticut. One high-income, one middle-income, and one low-income. Two very diverse, and one not at all. But one thing was true for all three neighborhoods: they are filled with hard-working, community-minded people who deserve access to opportunity. Housing policy reform is the ticket to creating this opportunity for all of my past and present neighbors – indeed for all of Connecticut's families.

We finally have a chance to chip away at the damage done by exclusionary zoning, racial covenants, redlining, and other past policy mistakes. I hope you will start by voting in favor of HB7297.