

Public Testimony for House Bill 7143

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I am writing in full support of H.B. 7143, An Act Concerning the Length of the Runway 2-20 at Tweed- New Haven Airport. I believe that eliminating the runway restriction on the airport will significantly bolster economic prosperity and increase young professional recruitment and retention in Connecticut.

I am practicing psychiatrist at the Department of Psychiatry within the School of Medicine, at Yale University. I live in Wooster Square with my partner, who is a traveling management consultant. We both travel significantly for work and personal reasons. For us, the major negative for living in New Haven is the limited accessibility of the airport. We truly enjoy the arts, university setting, neighborhood, and other positive aspects of New Haven. The reason we would choose to move is having poor travel accessibility. By expanding the runway, and having New Haven accessible to other destinations such as Chicago, Denver, or Texas, we would have much better access to national flights.

For me, I attend conferences and training programs at national and international locations. I frequently fly out of New York, and do so because there are limited options in New Haven. For example, I am traveling to Salt Lake City four times in the next 4 months for weeklong trainings in quality improvement. My travel plans include to Newark, NJ, or drive to John F. Kennedy airport for a direct flight. The Tweed option has two stopovers, and adds an additional 4 hours of travel time each way. Unfortunately, Philadelphia is not a major East Coast hub for connectivity, so I have to find alternatives for long-haul flights. I have long wished for Tweed to expand its flights beyond Philadelphia and weekly Charlotte flights. Notably, within the medical professions, Yale is an institution that trains a high number of specialists, but has difficulty retaining these specialists. Although there may be many reasons for this, one reason I've heard anecdotally from friends and colleagues has been the limited accessibility of the Tweed Airport.

For my partner, the situation is even more dire. He is a traveling consultant who weekly needs to connect to Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, and Boston. His commute requires getting to work by flying. He typically needs to fly out of Hartford or New York, which takes 1-2 hours from New Haven to reach. These hours add up, and on the whole, increase his total time away from home. Needless to say, we find it hard to imagine a sustainable future living in New Haven with his current role. Although he may change jobs to move closer to home, these choices are hard, and driven by systemic challenges in transportation. I also believe that other individuals and families may be struggling with similar types of career and family decisions.

In sum, important points to consider with the H.B. 7143 Bill are the following:

- Expanding the runway of Tweed will lead to economic prosperity to New Haven by being a more desirable place to live, and by extension, drawing more talented young professionals, such as physicians and healthcare providers
- The expansion will make it more convenient for individuals who already live in New Haven to travel and better retain these individuals
- The risk of not expanding the runway would be that individuals such as my partner and myself will find it difficult to sustainably stay in New Haven given the inconvenience and time

associated with travel, and strongly consider moving to another city to increase travel accessibility

- Having limited outgoing and incoming flights from the Tweed airport is a major reason that physicians and other talented working professionals are not attracted to permanently relocating to New Haven

As a community, we need to stand behind legislative changes and bills that can help improve economic prosperity and generate growth in our beloved state of Connecticut. I hope the members of the Committee on Transportation will strongly support this bill, since it has major implication on the future of Connecticut welfare.