



Legislative Testimony
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Written Testimony Supporting House Bill 6495, An Act Concerning Equity and Fair Lending

Senator Kasser, Representative Doucette, Ranking Member Berthel, Ranking Member Delnicki, and distinguished members of the Banking Committee:

My name is Kelly McConney Moore, and I am the policy counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT). I am submitting this testimony in support of House Bill 6495, An Act Concerning Equity and Fair Lending.

The ACLU-CT is an organization devoted to equity and justice for people of all races and backgrounds. The Constitution of the United States and the State of Connecticut both stand for the proposition that every person should be treated equally before the law, having equal civil rights and liberties. When private institutions perpetuate race-based discrimination, it is proper and constitutional to legislatively curb such efforts.

House Bill 6495 is an attempt to curb persistent discrimination in banking, and specifically in home lending. Black and Latinx mortgage applicants are charged higher interest and more substantial fees compared to white borrowers.¹ Of course, that is if those applicants can even receive a mortgage loan: between 2008 and 2015, 1.3 million creditworthy Black and Latinx mortgage applicants were rejected by lenders.² Black applicants, in particular, are denied mortgages at a rate 80% higher than white applicants.³

¹ Khristopher J. Brooks, "Disparity in home lending costs minorities millions, researchers find." CBS News, Nov. 15, 2019, available at <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/mortgage-discrimination-black-and-latino-paying-millions-more-in-interest-study-shows/>.

² *Id.*

³ Diana Olick, "A troubling tale of a Black man trying to refinance his mortgage." CNBC, Aug. 19, 2020, available at <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/08/19/lenders-deny-mortgages-for-blacks-at-a-rate-80percent-higher-than-whites.html>.

We support the efforts seen in House Bill 6495 to end these practices. By disallowing these practices, the legislature would send a strong message. By allowing investigations into not just individual complaints but also patterns of discrimination and unmet community credit needs, this legislation puts real authority into rooting out and eliminating racial discrimination, however discovered.

For these reasons, the ACLU-CT supports House Bill 6495 as a strong step toward racial justice in lending. We urge the Committee to support it, as well.