



OFFICE OF THE FIRST SELECTMAN

Michael R. Criss
First Selectman, Town of Harwinton

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

February 19, 2021

Good Afternoon, my name is Michael R. Criss, I am the First Selectman for the Town of Harwinton and I am submitting testimony regarding H.B. 6418 "An Act Concerning Abandoned & Blighted Property Receivership."

H.B. 6418 "An Act Concerning Abandoned & Blighted Property Receivership"

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and submit testimony on proposed H.B. 6418 "An Act Concerning Abandoned & Blighted Property Receivership." On behalf of the Town of Harwinton we support H.B. 6418 as the Town of Harwinton has drafted and adopted a Blight Ordinance for our own community in December, 2016. The town adopted a Blight Ordinance in order to have a mechanism in place to deal with the growing number of abandoned and blighted properties in our community. Ultimately, before this ordinance, abandoned & blighted properties devalued neighborhoods and increased squatting and vandalism. At the time, many of these affected properties were caused by bank foreclosures. Now, the pandemic puts us at risk of more foreclosures and increased abandonments of properties. Originally P.A. 19-92 established a receivership program in the state. However, the act only addressed municipalities with population thresholds of 35,000 or more to utilize the program to rehabilitate abandoned/neglected properties. With the passage of H.B. 6418, the population threshold which was originally created by P.A. 19-92, would be removed and allow all municipalities across the state to utilize this act.

Across the state, many communities and municipalities our size are suffering from an abundance of homes that have been abandoned or deemed blighted. As you know, deteriorating or abandoned properties, whether they be residential, commercial or industrial, create a public safety threat and nuisance and the effects of these blighted properties continue to cause a decline in property values throughout all of our neighborhoods whether they be urban or rural communities. These properties continue to create a financial burden for municipalities as a result of lost tax revenue. Passage of H.B. 6418 will continue to help all cities and small towns alike to reduce the cost and liability of vacant, abandoned and blighted properties and put them back on

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the tax rolls for productive uses. The town of Harwinton encourages the committee to support H.B. 6418 to ensure all municipalities have access to the program.

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony on behalf of the Town of Harwinton. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me at any time.

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