

# Planning and Development Committee

## JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** SB-127

AN ACT CONCERNING COMMUNITY INVESTMENT BOARDS AND

**Title:** NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE.

**Vote Date:** 3/4/2022

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 2/25/2022

**File No.:** 21

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### SPONSORS OF BILL:

Sen. Kevin C. Kelly, 21<sup>st</sup> Dist.

### REASONS FOR BILL:

The aim of this bill is to require certain municipalities to establish community investment boards to identify priorities for the use of municipal revenue sharing grants, require the Office of Policy and Management to accept proposals for solutions to problems specific to urban areas and establish pilot programs to implement such proposals, and establish a task force to study issues concerning nonprofit providers. The goal of this bill is to provide individuals with the increased ability to participate in the democratic process in an effort to provide greater resources and resolve community needs.

### RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None expressed

### NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

None expressed

### NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

**Kevin Alvarez, Director of Legislative Affairs, City of New Haven:** Mr. Alvarez testifies in opposition of the bill, as the methods of permitting community input in local governance will have negative impacts on city residents. With regards to the city of New Haven, Mr. Alvarez notes that the implementation of the measures outlined in this bill would provide unelected individuals with the authority to oversee over forty million dollars in state aid. While New

Haven is eager to allow individuals to participate in the democratic process, Mr. Alvarez opposes the bill's proposal to limit city government control to only 1/3 of the funds received by the state and allow unelected boards appointed by the chief executive to control state revenue.

**Betsy Gara, Executive Director, Connecticut Council of Small Towns:** Ms. Gara testifies on behalf of The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) in opposition of the bill, as it cedes budget making authority to unelected individuals that are not accountable to residents. Ms. Gara notes that this is a dangerous precedent, as provisions may be broadened to smaller municipalities and circumvent the roles residents play in voting on budgeting issues. While Ms. Gara testifies that COST supports efforts to encourage civic engagement in government, COST opposes the bill's proposal to cede budget authority away from elected officials.

**Donna Hamzy Carroccia, Advocacy Manager of The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM):** Ms. Hamzy Carroccia testifies on behalf of The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) in opposition of the bill, as they are unsure why it is necessary for Connecticut's urban centers to create Community Investment Boards. Ms. Hamzy Carroccia and COST oppose the bill's proposal, as they are concerned by the lack of specified requirements and the decision to provide unelected community members with decision making authority on critical state funding.

**Jeff Shaw, Senior Public Policy Advisor, The Alliance: Voice of Community Nonprofits:** Mr. Shaw testifies on behalf of The Alliance in opposition of the bill, as they are concerned the bill would divert state grants away from more essential community programs. Mr. Shaw additionally testifies that the bill's language is unclear regarding how priority issues would be established and managed. Regarding the creation of the task force, Mr. Shaw states that any task force created must address strategies to retain essential nonprofit employees, as nonprofits are currently suffering a workforce crisis as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. While Mr. Shaw and The Alliance support any and all efforts to provide community resources and local input, Mr. Shaw notes that the Neighborhood Assistance Act (NAA) is an existing program that already benefits the community. Mr. Shaw and The Alliance are in opposition of this bill proposal and recommend that the tax credit for NAA be increased from \$5 million to \$10 million as a greater motive to addressing community needs.

**Reported by: Lindsay Dickinson**

**Date: March 15, 2022**