

Housing Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-168

Title: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A RIGHT TO HOUSING.

Vote Date: 3/15/2022

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/1/2022

File No.:

***Disclaimer:** The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

SPONSORS OF BILL:

Sen. Saud Anwar, 3rd Dist.

Rep. Michael A. Winkler, 56th Dist.

Rep. David Michel, 146th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

In order to address the homeless population, this bill seeks to establish a right to housing by giving residents a right to protection from housing loss, safe and stable housing, affordable housing, rehousing, and recognition of special circumstances. A housing committee will be formed to ensure future policies work to ensure these rights, as well as review previous housing policies.

Similar legislation was considered in 2021, [SB 194](#).

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[State of Connecticut Judicial Branch](#) requested that the definition of "state agency" reference section 4-40b of the Connecticut General Statutes, which does not include the Judicial Branch. They testified that including the judicial branch would create a conflict within the judicial branch as the courts cannot take an affirmative position of advocate for one side.

[Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities](#), **Supports** this legislation and its goals. CHRO requested that section 2 of the bill be amended to include the "Commission's Executive Director or her designee as a member of the right to housing committee established by that section."

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Kiley Gosselin](#) – Executive Director – Partnership for Strong Communities, **Support-** Stating that "A state commitment to progressively implement policies to respect, protect, and fulfill a

right to affordable, decent, safe, and stable housing would help prevent the most serious consequences of housing insecurity and homelessness"

[Jim Perras](#) – CEO – Home Builders and Remodelers Association, **Supports** – stating that they agree with the premise of this legislation. They also requested that the committee established by this legislation include developers, land use experts and housing advocates. They also suggested that the committee should review "agency policies, procedures, and regulations that unduly slow housing production and drive-up costs." And that a similar review for housing costs be applied to all legislation considered.

They also requested that "SB 168 should be amended to focus directly on executive and legislative branch activities that drive up the costs of housing to achieve the best results for the communities the underlying bill seeks to assist."

[Lucy Nolan](#) – Director of Policy and Public Relations – Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence, **Supports** - Stating that they support the general purpose of this bill, and asks that "there be both a domestic violence and a sexual violence representative with knowledge of the unique housing insecurity experiences of both survivors of sexual violence and domestic violence appointed to the committee, not one or the other as the bill currently reads"

[Deb Polun](#) – Executive Director – Connecticut Association for Community Action, **Supports**- Stating that they support the general purpose of this bill, and that they would like to be included in the Right to Housing Committee once it is established.

[Dr. Gina Rosich](#) – National Association of Social Workers **Supports**- Stating housing insecurity is an economic issue. She disagrees that the bill is a slippery slope, but instead provides regulatory mechanisms to support the goal of affordable housing

[Annie Stockton Sabrowski](#) – Director of Housing Advocacy – CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence, **Supports**- Stating that they support the general purpose of this bill, and that they would like to be included in the panel of experts established in section 2.

[Jess Zaccagnino](#) – Policy Counsel – ACLU CT, **Supports**- Stating that this legislation would be especially helpful in establishing a right to housing for those with a criminal history.

[Eileen Healy](#), **Supports**- focusing on the need to for stable housing for those with disabilities.

[Chris Corcoran, Jessica Hollenbach, and Dr.Melanie Sue Collins](#)-Connecticut Children-s Medical Center, **Support**- stating that they support healthy housing environments and want to emphasize the need to a right to healthy homes free of toxins like lead paint, mold and other environmental toxins.

[John Souza](#) – President – CCOPO, **Supports** - stating that they appreciate the broad outline of the bill, but want to emphasize that the state should not be placing the burden of a right to housing on property owners or landlords. They also requested that a "landlord or property manager and an attorney that represents property owners in court, and a realtor" be included in the committee created by this legislation

[Kathleen Flaherty](#) - Executive Director – CT Legal Rights Project Inc, **Supports**

David Rich, President – CEO – The Housing Collective, - **Supports**

Caroline Beltre, **Supports**

Eric Tars – Legal Director – NHLC, **Supports**

Raphael Podolsky – CT Legal Services, **Supports**

Eli Sabin – Connecticut Voices for Children, **Supports**

Morgan Matthew – Executive Director – Journey Home **Supports**

Austin Lopez, Director of Specialized Community Services – Mental Health Connecticut, **Supports**

Michelle Lipar, **Supports**

Evonne Klein – CEO – Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness, **Supports**

Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, **Supports**

Kimberly Hart, **Supports**

David Gedraitis, **Supports**

The following residents of New Haven and/or Yale Dems, **Support**: Pia Edwards, Roxana Grunenwald, Josh Guo, Logan George, Braden Saskia, Tion Hoeckner, Joyce Liow, Yaz Liow, Bradley Nowacek, Miles Quarterman, Ted Shepherd, Brook Smith,

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Bob De Cosmo, **Opposes**- stating that housing providers should be included in the committee created by this legislation.

Betsy Gara – Executive Director – COST, **Opposes** – stating that this bill is too vague and could impose requirements on municipalities to create a right to housing, and duplicate some of the mandates that are already imposed onto towns.

Zachary Mckee – Senior Legislative Association – CCM, **Opposes** this legislation. stating that while they support the intent of the bill, they fear it is vaguely written. This lack of clarity could lead to unfunded mandates.

Francis Pickering – Executive Director – West COG, **Opposes** – stating that they are concerned that this bill will create a liability for the state by establishing a positive right to housing. Positive rights are rarely established in American law as the limited resources the state has makes it unlikely that they can be fully satisfied.

[Alvin Blound](#), **Opposes**

[Adam Bonoff](#), **Opposes**

[Paul Januszewski](#), **Opposes**

Reported by: William Cromwell

Date: 3/21/2022