

# Housing Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-6633

AN ACT CONCERNING A NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND FAIR SHARE PLANS

**Title:** FOR MUNICIPALITIES TO INCREASE AFFORDABLE HOUSING.

**Vote Date:** 3/2/2023

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 2/28/2023

**File No.:** 182

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

The Housing Committee

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

Low-income and middle-income families across the state of Connecticut are struggling to find affordable and accessible housing. Because of this housing shortage, these families are limited to residing in a few densely populated cities, inner suburbs, and rural areas. This bill will improve state-wide housing availability and allow for working families to have more housing options as it aims to promote the building of affordable housing in every town across the state.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

None stated.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

**Connecticut Voices for Children, Samaila Adelaiye:** supports this bill stating that it will improve housing availability for low- and middle-income families. It also stated that this policy will also positively affect economic growth and job creation in the state of CT.

**GHIAA, P'nai Or of West Hartford, Ruth Alcabes:** supports this bill stating that it will make the suburbs a more inclusive place to live and contribute economic growth and revitalization of our cities. It also states that this bill will aide in breaking down barriers that cause racial and socio-economic segregation in many areas of the state.

**Connecticut Resident, Chris Balfanz:** supports this bill stating that he is a real estate agent and resident in the town of Glastonbury, and has witnessed the housing crisis in Connecticut firsthand. He states that this bill will help the state succeed economically and as a result will reduce poverty and crime.

**Connecticut Resident, David Bechtel:** supports this bill stating that it will make the suburbs a more inclusive place to live and help revitalize our cities. He also states that this bill will address racial disparities, provide opportunities for more families to thrive, and boost the Connecticut economy overall.

**University of Connecticut School of Law, Professor, Bethany Berger:** supports this bill stating that this policy will help overcome inequality, draw industry to the state, and reverse the state's population and job deficits.

**Connecticut Resident, Hugh Blumenfeld:** supports this bill stating that this policy will reduce segregated towns and neighborhoods. He states that as physician in Hartford, he sees the results of segregation as his patients get an inferior education to children in suburban schools only a few miles away.

**Open Communities Alliance, Executive Director, Erin Boggs:** supports this bill stating that this policy will take major strides in addressing affordable housing and the housing segregation crisis while jumpstarting the economy.

**TALK, Member, Anne Bowman:** supports this bill stating that she herself has benefitted from affordable housing in the past as a child of parents who were veterans, and states that this policy will aide those who have not benefitted from generational wealth.

**Connecticut Resident, Trumbull, Thomas Broderick:** supports this bill stating that it will provide a fair allocation of housing in all municipalities. This testimony emphasizes that this bill provides opportunities for more Americans in the state of Connecticut.

**First Congregation Church of East Hartford, Pastor, Kelly Jane Caesar:** supports this bill stating that it will make CT suburbs a more inclusive place to live while contributing to economic growth and the revitalization of our cities.

**Connecticut Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, Executive Director, Gina Calabro:** supports this bill stating that this policy will aid the housing crisis and the impacts this has on social equity.

**Connecticut Resident, Ryan Cassella:** supports this bill stating that the cost of living is a serious barrier to Connecticut's growth and prosperity. Also states that this bill is an excellent step towards addressing Connecticut's housing shortages, and along with it, its segregated communities.

**Connecticut Resident, Joseph Cirsuolo:** supports this bill stating that CT is the 8<sup>th</sup> least affordable state in the nation, and it has high levels of racial and socioeconomic segregation due to exclusionary zoning regulations.

**Connecticut Resident, Chris Corcoran:** supports this bill as fair share housing will create over 80,000 jobs, 300,00 units of affordable workforce housing, and \$60 billion in economic growth.

**SNE Conference, Executive Minister, Chris Davies:** supports this bill stating that they are compelled by faith and scripture to provide dwelling places for the homeless and those unable to afford adequate housing.

**Connecticut Legal Rights Project, Executive Director, Kathleen Flaherty:** supports this bill stating that the lack of affordable housing in CT makes it difficult for her clients to leave institutions or to relocate.

**Garden Homes Management Corporation, President, Richard Freedman:** supports this bill stating that lack of housing production has been a leading cause of economic and stagnation in CT for decades.

**Yale Law School, Members of the Community & Economic Development and Housing Clinics:** supports this bill stating that it provides the most comprehensive and effective plan to address Connecticut's affordable housing crisis.

**Partnership for Strong Communities, Senior Policy Advisor, Sean Ghio:** supports this legislation stating that Connecticut's out of reach housing costs are a driver of its economic stagnation. Housing options, affordable at a range of incomes, are critical to attracting businesses to Connecticut, allowing CT families to free up income for other critical needs, like education, generating a pathway to middle-income stability.

**Fair Share Housing Center in New Jersey, Executive Director, Adam Gordon:** supports this bill stating that it will offer sustainable and equitable development while promote economic growth in CT, just as affordable housing has done in NJ.

**CCAPA, President, Emmeline Harrigan:** supports this bill stating unlike other zoning mandates, the fair share approach does not specify a certain size, type, or location of these housing units, but instead leaves the path toward achieving the fair share goal up to the specific abilities and preferences of the municipality.

**Connecticut Resident, Jill Harvey:** supports this bill stating it will provide a framework on which CT towns can create policies that ensure our residents will thrive tomorrow and for years to come.

**LISC, Executive Director, Jim Horan:** supports this bill stating Fair Share Planning & Zoning is a solution to the challenges that put local communities in the driver seat to plan and zone for growth, break through political logjams, and jumpstart the economic growth our state needs to thrive.

**CHRO, Executive Director, Tanya Hughes:** supports this bill stating it would give towns and planning regions control over development but would require some degree of development of affordable housing.

**YWCA Hartford Region, Director of Community Engagement and Advocacy, Melinda**

**Johnson:** supports this bill stating Connecticut has the 10th highest housing wage in the nation and is one of the most racially segregated states in the country, with housing inequality being a large factor in that segregation. States that this bill will improve these disparities.

**CoDE, Vice President, Danna Jolly:** supports this bill stating that this Fair Share bill will help make our communities more inclusive places to live and contribute to economic growth and revitalization of our cities and towns as it is modeled after successful legislation in New Jersey.

**CT Coalition to End Homelessness, CEO, Evonne Klein:** supports this bill stating Connecticut must address our housing needs by providing housing options and opportunities in all cities and towns. This measure will reduce homelessness and provide individuals and families with affordable homes.

**Commons CDC, Vice President, Ronald Kolanowski:** supports this bills stating that much housing in their community is not affordable or attainable, and they see young, bright people moving away because they cannot get a start in towns whose zoning rules maintain a system forcing them to leave communities in which they were born and raised.

**Connecticut Resident, Hannah Leckman:** supports this bill as she has lived in Spring Glen, CT for the entirety of her life, and has realized the town is too exclusionary. She believes this bill would benefit her town by bringing more diversity to the area.

**Sustainable Southbury, President, Charles Litty:** supports this bill as his town has 800 people who are housing-cost burdened.

**Connecticut Resident, Pamela Lockard:** supports this bill stating that every town in CT has an obligation to provide affordable housing, and low-income families should not be limited to Connecticut's larger cities to find it.

**Senate Democrats Office, Sen. Martin Looney:** supports this bill stating it is undeniable that CT does not have sufficient housing for its population, and this bill attempts to remedy these problems and focus on equity issues that have long beset housing.

**North Hartford Partnership, Executive Director, Patrick Mckenna:** supports this bill stating every new affordable home is an opportunity for a family to thrive; thriving families earn more, educate their children more, and contribute more to our communities.

**Spring Forward, Marissa Mead:** supports this bill stating CT has an overabundance of exclusivity and a scarcity of affordable housing, and states that the state needs more diverse types of housing.

**N. London Human Services Network, Co-Convener, Jeanne Milstein:** supports this bill stating every Connecticut community has an obligation to contribute to meeting the housing needs of our state, including permitting its fair share of housing for low- and moderate-income households.

**CT Coalition on Housing and Homelessness, Steering Committee, Sue Murphy:** supports this bill stating our state's housing crisis cannot be solved unless municipalities take

an active role in creating more affordable housing, and decades of experience have shown that many towns are not willing or able to do this on their own initiative.

**Connecticut Resident, Rev. Kari Nicewander:** supports this bill stating Connecticut's segregation and lack of affordable housing across the state creates a situation in which the most diverse areas of are the most impoverished.

**People friendly Stamford, Zachary Oberholtzer:** supports this bill stating Connecticut is in desperate need of new housing stock, especially for low income residents but also market rate housing.

**The Arc of Connecticut, Director of Advocacy, Carol Scully:** supports this bill stating every municipality must have affordable housing options so their residents can age in place in the community of their choice and/or find affordable housing near their place of employment.

**Hartford Foundation, Senior Public Policy Offer, Chris Senecal:** supports this bill stating it is projected that the passage and successful implementation of Fair Share Planning and Zoning could create approximately 300,000 units of market rate and affordable housing over ten years to address Connecticut's crucial housing needs.

**CT Working Families, Policy Director, Roger Senserrich:** supports this bill stating that it will help ensure that everyone in the state has access to affordable housing, and states that high housing prices, low employment growth, and a sluggish economy are not inevitable, but a policy choice.

**Creating Sustainable Communities, Co-Founder, Janet Tanner:** supports this bill stating in order to ensure fair and equitable housing for all CT residents, it is vital that local zoning ordinances, that keep housing unaffordable in many towns, be changed to make housing more available throughout the State of CT for many low income residents.

**Hispanic Federation, Regional Director, Yanidsi Velez:** supports this bill stating the need for housing reform is more pressing than ever and we need every tool to work together to end segregation that continues to pervade our state.

**HANH, Housing Policy Manager, Will Viederman:** supports this bill stating that it addresses the fundamental causes of Connecticut's housing crisis.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**Connecticut Resident, Gwen Ackley:** opposes this bill stating that this legislation would impose extreme density on our local communities without regard to existing capacity. It states that the bill will result in municipalities being sued and forced to build at public expense housing, while also including the fact that a similar act was passed in New Jersey, and it did not create affordability or improve density.

**Connecticut Resident, Kevin Atkins:** opposes this bill stating that this policy is a one-size-fits-all program that will not be effective for every individual state, and states that this bill will burden communities with additional costs.

**Greenwich AH Trust Fund, Chairperson, Robert Barolak:** opposes this bill stating instead of enacting this policy the state should instead support initiatives such as Governor Lamont's recent proposal to provide \$600 million of grants and soft money loans for affordable housing.

**First Selectman, Weston, Woody Bliss:** opposes this bill stating that the cost of adding affordable housing units would be too high as Weston is a town on wells and septic fields.

**Connecticut Resident, Gerard, O'Brien:** opposes this bill stating that it will impose extreme density on our local communities without regard to existing capacity.

**Connecticut Resident, Jan Carpenter:** opposes this bill stating that it will impose extreme density on local communities without regard to existing capacity.

**Connecticut Resident, Kevin Cleary:** opposes this bill stating that his town is already overdeveloped, and this bill takes away local municipalities control over their own towns.

**Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, Director of Public Policy, Brian Connor:** opposes this bill stating this bill would create an alternative punitive process to assess and implement the state-wide need for affordable housing and imposes a top down policy onto the backs of local governments.

**Yankee Institute, Legal and Policy Analyst, Christopher Tohir:** Mr. Tohir notes the opposition of the Yankee institute to HB-6633, noting that " This legislation not only threatens the cherished Connecticut tradition of local control of municipal towns, but by forcing potentially unworkable mandates on them, it could jeopardize their operational and financial well-being".

**First Selectman, Harwinton, Michael Criss:** opposes this bill stating it will impose an overreaching, costly burden on municipalities and undermine existing efforts to address affordable housing.

**Connecticut Resident, Linda Dalessio:** opposes this bill stating that the state has no right to dictate where housing is built.

**Connecticut Resident, Shereece Davidson:** opposes this bill stating that building affordable housing units will ruin the charm, character, and beauty of areas in CT.

**Connecticut Resident, Alice Dew:** opposes this bill stating that forcing towns to build affordable housing a certain way as dictated by OPM is not the best way to go about the issue as many towns prefer less state oversight rather than more.

**Connecticut Resident, Granby, Maureen Eberly:** opposes this legislation stating that her small town will be unable to provide the infrastructure for these housing units as they are a rural farming town.

**Connecticut Resident, Karen Fassuliotis:** opposes this bill stating it would impose extreme density on Greenwich and other communities without regard to existing capacity or infrastructure needs.

**CGA, Senate Republicans, Sen. Ryan Fazio:** opposes this bill stating that 8-30g takes away significant local input from towns and has not created economic mobility in the state. He states that this policy is deeply unfair to many CT communities.

**Connecticut Resident, David Fong:** opposes this bill stating that there is a difference between cities and towns in CT, and affordable housing should be limited to mostly cities as they are already a densely populated area. States that putting affordable housing units in small towns will take away the town setting.

**Connecticut Council of Small Towns, Executive Director, Betsy Gara:** opposes this bill stating based on New Jersey's Fair Share Housing Law, this legislation will do little to advance affordable housing and will instead imposes other complex and costly mandates on municipalities.

**River COG, Executive Director, Samuel Gold:** opposes this legislation stating that this bill will direct finite populations and resources away from the cities. He states that a true fair share bill would consider a holistic approach to housing, including investment in our cities, rather than abandoning and excluding them.

**Connecticut Resident, Nicole Hampton:** opposes this bill as it is unfair and believes that fair share housing will end single family zoning in CT forever.

**CT169Strong, President, Alexis Harrison:** opposes this bill stating fair share laws will erase single family zoning, and its adverse consequences would impact our neighborhoods, our infrastructure and our sensitive coastal environmental habitats.

**Selectwomen, Wilton, Kim Healy:** opposes this bill stating at a time when CT residents are all struggling with record inflation, increased state taxes and utility costs, to expect residents to support this bill is not fair, as it will effectively double the 8-30g affordable unit mandate of our municipalities.

**Housing Authority of New Canaan, Chairman, Scott Hobbs:** opposes this bill stating that this bill cannot be enacted while maintaining the desirability of small town New England communities.

**Sasquanaug Association, Board Member and Past President, John Ijams:** opposes this bill stating he is a lifelong Democrat, and is in favor of HB06633 or any bill that does not offer the flexibility that every town in CT needs to create sufficient affordable housing stock throughout CT. States that the plan provided in this bill will not work for towns such as Fairfield where he himself resides.

**Connecticut Resident, Christopher Johnson:** opposes this bill stating he disagrees with lines 70-75, 107-127, 141-151, 170-193, 194-201, and 247-279.

**Connecticut Resident, Ann Katis:** opposes this bill stating concerns with expanding sewer capacities in towns, the fact that conservation directors have not been consulted, and the fact that this is a one-size-fits-all policy.

**Connecticut Resident, Jay Koolis:** opposes this bill stating that they recognize the state-wide housing crisis, but do not support the plan in which this bill will enact.

**Connecticut Resident, Robert Lavelle:** opposes this bill stating that it will change safety and quality of life in many towns across CT.

**Republican National Committeewoman, Leora Levy:** opposes this bill as it will impose statewide mandates on every municipality except a few, forcing them to rapidly develop government and deep-restricting housing, effectively doubling the 8-30g requirements.

**First Selectman, Town of Sherman, Don Lowe:** opposes this bill stating each town has its own particular and unique housing situation, and some towns do not have the sewage and water systems to support large cluster developments.

**Greenwich Republicans, Chairwomen, Beth MacGillivray:** opposes this bill stating it will burden towns with more costs and a complicated points system, which additionally opening the door to costly litigation.

**Connecticut Resident, Nora Maloney:** opposes this bill stating it subjects local planning and zoning issues to a top-down political agenda.

**Western Ct COG, Executive Director, Francis Pickering:** opposes this bill stating that a vote for Fair Share policies is a vote to raise property taxes.

**Selectwoman, Town of Greenwich, Lauren Rabin:** opposes this bill stating we need proper metrics for demand for housing, such as where jobs are in the state, what is the access to transportation, what are the limits of infrastructure, water tables, sewage capacity, and the environment, and cost of living in each area.

**Reported by:** Riley St. Pierre

**Date:** 3/15/23