

# Housing Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-5336

AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CONNECTICUT

**Title:** HOUSING AND SEGREGATION STUDY.

**Vote Date:** 3/7/2024

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 3/5/2024

**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:**

Housing Committee

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

This bill would promote the development of affordable housing through the adoption of certain recommendations of the Connecticut Housing and Segregation Study concerning (1) the equalization of state housing assistance payments with federal Housing Choice Voucher rental assistance payments, (2) requiring biennial inspections of any housing unit participating in the rental assistance program, and (3) the modification of certain scores under the Qualified Allocation Plan adopted by the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) and the Commissioner of the Department of Housing (DOH).

## **SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:**

Extends income reexamination periods for tenants from one to two years for (1) residents of moderate-income housing administered by public housing authorities, and (2) individuals receiving elderly housing rental assistance.

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

None Expressed.

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

[Representative Jason Rojas, House Majority Leader, Connecticut General Assembly \(CGA\):](#)

Supports HB 5336 in implementing the recommendations presented by OPM's Connecticut Housing and Segregation Study. The bill "adopts recommendations that would align

Connecticut's housing assistance payments with those available through the federal Housing Choice Voucher Program," as well as "lighten mandates by requiring that the Commissioner of Housing evaluate low-income households participating in the rental assistance program biennially instead of annually." This legislation would also "reorganize Qualified Allocation Plan scoring to promote affordable housing development in communities, primarily rural and suburban, currently lacking."

[Erin Boggs, Executive Director, Open Communities Alliance](#): Expressed general support for Sections 1 and 2 if the language was amended, and their suggestions can be found in the linked testimony. Open Communities Alliance opposes Section 3 of the bill and offers potential changes.

[Morgan Considine, Director of Data, School and State Finance Project](#): Supports the legislation prioritizing affordable housing developments in communities with high levels of unmet demands. Building more affordable housing will create educational opportunities for Connecticut students by reducing barriers to moving into communities.

[Sean Ghio, Policy Director, Partnership for Strong Communities](#): Requests that the "Low Income Housing Tax Credit Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) process continue to provide meaningful opportunities for public input into the QAP." Ghio states that requiring elements outside of federal requirements may unintentionally limit public input.

[Eli Sabin, Legislative Coordinator, Connecticut Voices for Children \(CT Voices\)](#): Generally supports the intent of HB 5336 but wants to ensure that the State does not inadvertently slow development. Specifically, Sabin states "carrots" are an important tool to ensure desegregation as the state builds more housing, but it would be unproductive to "penalize municipalities that already hold affordable housing stock from building more options."

The following testimonies expressed general support:

- [Rose Kelly, Interim Director, HMIS and Strategic Analysis, Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness \(CCEH\)](#)
- [Danielle O'Sullivan](#)

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

[Betsy Gara, Executive Director, Connecticut Council of Small Towns \(COST\)](#): Opposes Section 3 of HB 5336 that would require the state to incorporate a "fair share." Gara shares that the "fair share" methodology may impose an undue burden on municipalities.

[Nandini Natarajan, CEO, Connecticut Housing Finance Authority \(CHFA\)](#): Opposes Section 3 of the legislation. CHFA believes that potential unintended consequences may arise if this section were to be enacted.

The three testimonies below oppose the fair share allocation as it will move funding and incentives for housing developments away from cities. These testimonies express concern that moving funding from areas with housing demands to other areas may curb affordable housing development:

- [Samuel Gold, Executive Director, Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments \(RiverCOG\)](#)

- [Francis Pickering, Executive Director, Western Connecticut Council of Governments \(WestCOG\)](#)
- [Carol Scully, Director of Advocacy, The Arc](#)

The following nine testimonies agree on the goal of building affordable housing but oppose HB 5336. These testimonies express concern on three specific pieces of the bill, with specific concerns raised on the usage of "Fair Share" in the qualified allocation plan:

- [Greg Dal Piaz](#)
- [Karen Fassuliotis](#)
- [John Hair](#)
- [Dani Harrington](#)
- [John Ijams](#)
- [Peter McGuinness](#)
- [Andrea Sandor](#)
- [Warren Serenbetz](#)
- [Maria Weingarten, Founder, CT169Strong](#)

The following testimonies express general opposition to the bill:

- [Gary Corigliano](#)
- [Penny Cozza](#)
- [Anthony Petrella](#)
- [Brian Rathburn](#)
- [Jessica Stauder](#)
- [Patricia Thatcher](#)

**Reported by: Mario Volpe**

**Date: 3/20/2024**