

Planning and Development Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6611

AN ACT CONCERNING A NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND OTHER POLICIES

Title: REGARDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT.

Vote Date: 3/31/2021

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/15/2021

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Rep. Josh Elliott, 88th Dist.

Rep. Jason Rojas, 9th Dist.

Rep. Juan R. Candelaria, 95th Dist.

Rep. Michael A. Winkler, 56th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

Cost of living, and housing especially, is high in Connecticut. These costs disproportionately impact low-income residents, as much of their wages go toward housing. Further, because of exclusionary zoning, Black and Latino residents have been disproportionately impacted by high housing costs in Connecticut. The bill would allow the state to mandate that local zoning boards allocate proportional spaces for affordable housing to mitigate exclusionary zoning.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

N/A

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Reverend Eric Dobson and Adam Gordon of the Fair Share Housing Center in New Jersey: Voiced support, citing the 'Mount Laurel Hill Doctrine' of New Jersey as a model.

David N. Kinsey, PhD, FAICP, Kinsey & Hand Planning: Voiced support, explaining how strategy used by 'Mount Laurel Hill Doctrine' of New Jersey could work in Connecticut.

Karen Anderson, Yale Law School Housing Clinic: Voiced support citing that over 135,000 families who earn less than 30% of the area median income currently spend over

half their incomes on housing. Connecticut suburbs have historically excluded Black and Latino families, who also face limited housing mobility. Cited Woodbridge/New Haven as evidence of exclusionary zoning.

Dave Betchel, member of Spring Forward: Voiced support, testimony summarized by statement, "Towns must be held responsible for creating the abundant, diversified housing that we need." Claims economic and racial disparities must be addressed.

Erin Boggs, Executive Director of Open Communities Alliance (OCA): Voiced support, claiming similar proposal has been successful in New Jersey. "Zoning reform in wealthy communities will decrease housing pressure on urban communities most at risk of gentrification and displacement."

Paolo Campos, AIA, NOMA, President of The National Organization of Minority Architects – Connecticut Chapter: Voiced support. Testimony claimed zoning has created inequality, homogeneity in housing types, low density and sprawl.

Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association: Voiced support, citing the economic importance of lowering housing costs and 'moral and ethical obligations to provide fair and equitable housing opportunities.' Claimed New Jersey sets a good example for fair share approach.

Queenie Collins: Voiced support, claiming, "... many in predominantly white communities have begun to recognize that there is much work to do to ensure their towns are welcoming to all." Testimony claims CT is heavily segregated and the issue must be addressed.

Reverend Jack Perkins Davis, Spring Glen Church: Voiced support, claiming the bill helps to decrease institutional racism.

Seema Doshi: Voiced support, claiming there is correlation between zip code and public health due to a variety of socioeconomic factors that affect health.

Marcia DuFore, Executive Director of Amplify, Inc: Voiced support, suggesting better housing opportunities improve public health.

Antonia Edwards: Voiced support that the bill attempts to right the wrongs of segregation.

Amy Ewing: Voiced support that when left unsupervised by the state, there is little positive change in communities.

Kenneth Foscue: Voiced support that the bill will bring equality and economic growth, and empower towns to determine how to contribute affordable housing. The testifier grew up in North Carolina and was surprised at the de facto segregation in CT when he moved here.

Shanay Fulton: Voiced support, summarizing that, "The housing generated by this bill will also give lower income families, particularly those residing in cities, greater market power so they will not be behold to less scrupulous landlords. Nor be subjected to greater potential for eviction and less than favorable living condition."

Lauren Garrett, Spring Forward: Voiced support, claiming current zoning is outdated and historically racist.

Sam Griffin, M.C.P, Policy and Data Analyst for Open Communities Alliance: Voiced support. Testimony suggested that the bill will have economic benefits because of entrepreneurial opportunities for developers, increased tax revenue and stimulation of economy because fewer families will be cost-burdened by housing, among other positive impacts.

Nancy Goodwin: Voiced support that the bill will be good for the economy and promote equity.

Partnership for Strong Communities: Voiced support that the bill will be good for the economy and promote equity.

Leslie Hammond: Voiced support for bill, claimed towns have failed at desegregating the state and improving transportation.

Hartford Foundation for Public Giving: Voiced Support: "6611 calls for an assessment of the statewide need for affordable housing and sets an allocation of such need to planning regions and municipalities. To ensure that all Connecticut municipalities play a role in the state's efforts, the bill calls for the creation of goals around the development of affordable housing for each municipality."

Shana Hurley: Voiced support, claiming the bill will help close opportunity gaps in schools.

Makaela Kingsley: Voiced support, claiming the bill will address issues while allowing towns to plan and zone how they see fit.

Greg Kirschner, Connecticut Fair Housing: Voiced support: "Connecticut must take thoughtful and comprehensive action to address its affordable housing crisis and take steps to remedy the persistent segregation that plagues the state. H.B. 6611 offers the opportunity to do both."

Jennifer G. Kleindienst: Voiced support, claiming the bill will reduce segregation and affordable housing crisis. Housing is expensive relative to wages, which disproportionately impacts Black and Latinx residents.

John Levin: Voiced support, confirming claims that the bill would usurp local power. However, testimony claims removal of local control is necessary because individual towns perpetuate segregation.

Nicole Lotko: Voiced support, claiming the bill will help to correct years of redlining.

Lucas Pamela, Director of TALK: Voiced support, claiming the bill will help create affordable housing while still allowing sufficient local control.

Isabel Buck McEachem: Voiced support, claiming current zoning is outdated and historically racist.

Marissa Dionne Mead, AIA, NOMA, LEEDAP, Co-founder of Spring Forward: Voiced support that 6611 is ethically and economically a good decision.

Tim Morse: Voiced support, claimed that state is too segregated.

J.L. Pottenger Jr: Voiced support. Testimony summarized by quote, "Wealthy Connecticut towns create exclusionary zoning policies that ostensibly seek to 'preserve the character of the neighborhood' by keeping housing units to homogenous, expensive single-family homes." Further explains effects and history of exclusionary zoning.

Marlaina Rodriguez, MSW Intern at New Reach and Program Coordinator at Family Promise of Central CT: Voiced support. Testimony cited the OCA data, and believed the bill will increase job growth, economic mobility, tax revenue and improve education.

Rep. Jason Rojas, House Majority Leader: Voiced support. Commented on the, "caustic, myopic, gaslighting rhetoric that is used by proponents of the status quo." While testimony agrees that the proposed changes are significant, it also claims they are necessary to improve other areas in addition to housing, such as public health, economic mobility, education and crime. Testimony implores colleagues to ask these questions:

1. What are your ideas to address the cost of housing and the availability of affordable housing?
2. Do you believe in enforcing Fair Housing laws?
3. Do you believe that we should work towards reducing racial and economic segregation?

Ann Sarnak, Yale Housing Clinic Member: Voiced support. Connecticut is one of the most segregated states and has very high cost of living. The bill will ensure that municipalities preserve affordable housing, according to testimony. Testimony also claims that affordable housing will attract more residents to the state.

Daniel Shackelford, Community & Economic Development Clinic: Voiced support. Cited New Jersey's model as an example for Connecticut to reduce segregation and increase affordable housing.

Denise Weeks: Voiced support. Testimony claims the bill is valuable because it will increase bargaining power of the consumer, as they will have more housing options, thus preventing landlords from charging the currently high prices. Testimony believes the bill sets groundwork, but allows towns to determine for themselves how to contribute.

Yale Law School Faculty: Voiced support. Testimony review the history and problems associated with ongoing racial and socioeconomic segregation in Connecticut. Particular support was voiced for 6611 because it will allow low income children to move to areas where there are more opportunities.

Anika Singh Lemar, Clinical Professor of Law at Yale: Voiced support. Testimony claimed exclusionary zoning in Connecticut is the worst in the country, and local governments neglect current state statutes. Testimony claims the bill will not strip local governments of zoning ability, but will more clearly define their roles.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Anne Ahern: Voiced opposition, claiming the bill does not provide permanent solutions. According to testimony, it does not address social inequity, does not provide for homeownership, and does not provide for affordable housing. Testimony claims cities have been financially responsible, while the state has been less so, and therefore the state should not take on further authority proposed by the bill.

Joseph Annis Jr, Lori Annis, Bonnie and Arthur Ashman, David Bauer, Wayne Billingham, Bob Brisard, Eileen Bronko, Vanessa Caporrino, Adam Carrington, Jean Connors, Michael Connoy, James and Kinga Cook, Nancy Cooper, Paul Costeines, Nancy Crump, Timothy Dalton, Joseph DiCristina, Roy Downey, Richard Sebastian, Rose Fisch, Morton Fischer, Robert Gaudio, Nancy Glynn, Ronald Goodmaster, Michael Gray, Larry A. Henrikson, Lori Hilton, Tony Keating, Donald Kentzel, Wayne Kilpatrick, Andrew Koehm, Gary Kopsco, Kenneth Kopsco, Mickey LaCrosse, Robert Lavezzoli, Joseph Licek, Jamie Lineberger, Joan Liska, Mark Lloret, Rick Loh, John F. Mancini, Mark McCusker, Patricia McCusker, Christopher Millin, Aurora Montini, Matt Nowack, James P. Oechsler, Kari Olson, Barbara Peterson, Gary Petterson, Palmorr H. Pitti, Cathy Politi, AnnMarie Puleo, Tim and Denise Purcell, Kathleen Randall, Virginia Sanford, Tab Shanafelt, Caroline Smith, Bob Svensk, H. Samuel Swoyer, David and Lea Sylvestro, Bruce Tolhurst, Jacqueline Trofa, Geoff Viscount, John Waldron, James P. Williams, Sandra Williams, Karen Winget, Joan Winter, Andrew Zwick, Robert Catino, Richard Kuehlewind, Dan Ozizmir: Voiced general opposition to 6611.

Anonymous: Voiced opposition, viewing the bill as a 'one-size fits all' approach that will damage uniqueness of local communities and make people leave the state.

Bonnie and Arthur Ashman: Voiced opposition, claiming the bill will change character and livability of towns.

Doreen K. Battimelli: Voiced opposition, claiming some towns' infrastructure cannot handle the burden the bill would allegedly create.

Crystal Berry: Voiced opposition, claiming home town of Greenwich already has diverse housing.

Suzanne Binelli: Voiced opposition, believes the bill will make it more difficult for people to live in small towns if they want to live in small towns.

Jill Blodgett: Voiced opposition, wants local autonomy.

Susan Brace: Voiced opposition, wants local autonomy.

Frank Bugaj: Voiced opposition, wants local autonomy.

Lisa Carpenter: Voiced opposition, wants local autonomy.

Donald Cavanaugh: Voiced opposition, wants local autonomy.

Frederick Centrella: Voiced opposition, wants local autonomy.

Charles Chiusano: Voiced opposition, wants local autonomy.

Kevin and Joyce Cole: Voiced opposition, wants local autonomy.

Leo Colgan: Voiced opposition, cites value of local autonomy.

Richard and Karen Collins: Voiced opposition, citing local autonomy and environmental concerns.

Jane Connors: Voiced opposition, claims bill decreases local autonomy.

Frank DeFelice: Voiced opposition, believes identifying parcels of land in advance will have adverse effects on prices of land.

Mike DeMato: Voiced opposition, claiming building companies will unfairly profit from new rules.

William DeRosa: Voiced opposition, wants local autonomy.

Lynne Drazen: Voiced opposition, claiming the bill is bullying and undemocratic.

Harold J. Falber: Voiced opposition. Testimony claimed small rural towns do not have the resources to adhere to the bill, as there is very little commercial activity to tax, and no realistic access to public transportation. People choose to live in small towns despite the challenges, and Falber's town of Weston strives to make housing more affordable by including smaller lots. Testimony stated, "it is egregious for a group of state legislatures to rip from our hands, self-determination and self-administration where there is not a single piece of evidence of Weston having ever had a discriminatory practice."

Betsy Gara, Executive Director, Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST): Voiced opposition and urged consideration of provisions in HB-6107 which establish a working group to develop guidelines and incentives with Section 8-30j, CGS. COST asked for regional approaches to be considered, in addition to a list of other recommendations.

Gregory & Patricia Georgette: Voiced opposition that unique needs and geography of each community must be considered, especially because of 'vindictive' developers in the anecdote of the testimony. A developer has continuously appealed the town of Stratford's denial of building a development in place of 300 acres of park and forest, repeatedly costing the taxpayers legal fees. The testimony values town commissions because the development would be in an area that otherwise has no sidewalks, uses septic, and has no public transportation.

Samuel S. Gold, AICP, Executive Director of Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments (RiverCog): Voiced opposition, claiming the bill would make towns less sustainable and economically harm towns attempted to become more transit-oriented/less car dependent. Testimony cited Middletown as a model for a 'lively and diverse commercial

center because of its public transportation and employment. However, testimony claimed the bill would create developments on the outer edges of the town, away from these opportunities. Testimony argued that investing in education, public transportation and childcare in cities would be a better use of money than the bill. Testimony claimed OCA estimated that 6611 would create 300,000 new housing units in the first 10 years, which is allegedly twice the number of all housing units built in the past 20 years. It is further argued that if the state's population continues to stagnate or decline, there will be an excess of housing units.

Dr. Mitchell H. Greenberg and Dr. Judith N. Shapiro: Voiced opposition, claiming local government exercises better judgement than the state.

Robert H. Hall: Voiced opposition claiming municipalities will not benefit if more than 20% of its population is below the federal poverty level. Voiced concern in removal of local control, and claimed the language of the bill regarding judiciary actions is bad because it shows how the bill can negatively impact municipalities.

Donna Hamzy, Advocacy Manager, The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM): Voiced opposition, suggesting that sweeping legislation puts a burden on local governments. Further, CCM proposed changes in terminology of the bills and believes municipalities should have been consulted.

Virginia Harger: Voiced opposition in following comments: "In HB 6611, lines 63-73, the bill indicates that an assessment be made by the Office of Policy and Management 'of the state-wide need for affordable housing to determine the regional need base for each planning region.' The determination would be based on something called a data set published by HUD. The bill does not state the date of the data set, so should we assume it would be the most recently published data set and how often is the data set updated by HUD?"

Susan Hastings: Voiced opposition. Acknowledged that Connecticut needs more diverse housing, however, testimony claimed loss of local control will lead to issues such as overcrowding, overuse of water and the environment and overburden of public water and sewer.

Roger Hess: Voiced opposition. Testimony claimed state overreach, municipalities have already begun taking measures to make housing more affordable and are being more effective than the state could be.

Stephen Hudspeth: Voiced opposition. Acknowledged that housing and education practices have been segregationist in the past, however, claimed the bill (in addition to others) are, "radical" and "draconian."

Andrea Jeraci: Voiced opposition, claiming state government is fiscally irresponsible.

Lynn Keenan: Voiced opposition, claiming affordable housing to fill needs of employers leads to unhealthy and cramped conditions.

Robert V. Lardon: Voiced opposition. Testifier was former vice-chair of Greenwich Budget Oversight Committee. Testimony claimed 6611, and other bills, will damage real estate value and cause more people and businesses to leave the state.

Jason Levy: Voiced opposition. Testimony claims local boards know best, and towns such as Simsbury have already successfully made their schools more diverse.

Anne Manusky, President of Connecticut Republican Assembly: Voiced opposition, claiming the bill usurps "Freedom, Liberty and Rights in regard to local control."

Mary Yvonne Marchese and John Flaherty: Voiced opposition, claiming Hartford does not understand affordable housing issues in individual towns as well as local government.

Amey Marrella: Voiced opposition, claiming, "It is vitally important to recognize that the zoning differences from town to town reflect geographic and environmental differences. For example, some towns such as Woodbridge offer vital open space or public water supply watershed."

Robbie Marshall: Voiced opposition. Testimony claimed loss of local control will lead to issues such as overcrowding, overuse of water and the environment and overburden of public water and sewer.

Barry Michelson: Voiced opposition. Claimed bill, "would marginalize self-rule and subject us to bureaucratic scrutiny from Hartford."

Leslie and Giuliano Minasi: Voiced opposition. Testimony claimed loss of local control will lead to issues such as overcrowding, overuse of water and the environment and overburden of public water and sewer.

Grant Monsarrat: Voiced opposition. Testimony claimed the bill does not effectively address inequality, and alleged that the homestate government is less fiscally responsible than local governments.

Vicki Morton: Voiced opposition, wants local autonomy.

Krista L. Nielson: Voiced opposition. Testimony claimed Desegregate CT relies on assumption that more housing will lead to cheaper housing, and does not believe the "one size fits" all approach will be effective in its goals.

Janet O'Malley: Voiced opposition. Claimed, "The State has historically demonstrated that it does not do better than the local community what is best for each town," and that the bill will destroy rights of property owners.

Frank Pappalardo: Voiced opposition. Claimed the state should trust local governments who know their own communities best.

John Paris: Voiced opposition. Testimony claimed loss of local control will lead to issues such as overcrowding, overuse of water and the environment and overburden of public water and sewer.

John Pepper: Voiced opposition. Testimony stated: "Zoning control must remain a local issue or Connecticut as we know it will cease to exist. The state will become an unending strip mall."

Jim Perras, CEO Home Builders & Remodelers Association of CT: Voiced opposition. Testimony appreciated the intent and believes production of housing has not met demand for decades due to zoning. However, testimony claimed local governments know zoning best.

Francis Pickering, Executive Director of WestCOG: Voiced opposition. Claimed numerical targets of construction of affordable housing would be created in "every municipality except those with high poverty rates;" where affordable housing should be needed most. Further, testimony claims areas with above average poverty would be denied funds under the bill rather than assisting those areas. Testimony claimed the bill aims to create 300,000 new homes (space for 765,000 people), however the state's population is not expected to increase in the meantime, leading to vacant properties. Effectively, testimony claims towns such as Danbury have made progress in increasing employment, business and transit in its downtown, and the bill would reverse this progress. Rather than allowing Danbury to continue creating jobs within walking distance of affordable housing, the bill would force Danbury to, "... direct new housing to outlying areas that lack transit and public infrastructure... that lack jobs and services in walking distance, and where homes will not create positive 'feet on the street' impacts."

Paul f. Piezzo, Planning and Zoning Commission member of Sprague, CT: Voiced opposition. According to testimony, Sprague has, "more than enough affordable housing stock" since its largest employer left. Further, the bill may negatively impact property values according to testimony.

Lisa Pojano: Voiced opposition. Testimony claimed 6611 and associated bills are "direct assault" on local control and ignore infrastructure and resource overuse.

Meral Prewitt: Voiced opposition, stating belief in, "Unique needs and geography of each community (including cities, suburbs, and rural areas) must be considered."

Guy Prochilo: Voiced opposition, with testimony reading: " The need for more diverse housing in Connecticut must be addressed; however, the unique needs and geography of each community (including cities, suburbs, and rural areas) must be considered."

Laurie Quick: Voiced opposition, claimed Fairfield has already become too crowded.

Diana Quill: Voiced opposition, claimed, "Towns should be able to keep their 'character' as the town's people choose."

Barbara Reggio-Brown: Voiced opposition, citing value of rewarding hard work with the choice of living somewhere rural and quiet. Testimony claimed, "If you start moving in apartment buildings and government housing, then everything this state promised us was a lie!"

Cathy Reiss: Voiced opposition, claiming local government is better suited for zoning than the state, which is overreaching its power.

Deno Rubera: Voiced opposition, claiming bill will damage beauty and environment of state.

Frank Santacroce: Voiced opposition, claiming the bill will turn Shelton into an "inner city." Testimony explains, "They are building a house right up the street from me on top of another house. leave our town alone PLEASE. we do not need affordable housing."

Manny Santos, former mayor of Meriden: Voiced opposition, arguing there does not need to be more new affordable housing, but that too many regulations have made it expensive and difficult to find jobs in the state.

Loraine Seder: Voiced opposition. Testimony claimed loss of local control will lead to issues such as overcrowding, overuse of water and the environment and overburden of public water and sewer.

Joseph Shalleck: Voiced opposition, claiming the needs of communities cannot be understood and addressed from Hartford.

Claudia and Paul Shaum: Voiced opposition, claiming, "... there is no proof that any of this housing would actually be affordable or that a great diversity of individuals would benefit. It is a theory, it seems, without verified merit and a myopic view of how planning works."

Alan Shaw: Voiced opposition, claiming the legislation seemed deliberately confusing and is an attempt of the state to gain more power.

Ross Tartell: Voiced opposition. Testimony recognizes that Connecticut's zoning has been discriminatory in the past, however the bill does not properly address the issue. Testimony claims that Wilton's Plan of Conservation and Development has already begun to address diversified housing. The testimony claimed that people are becoming more divided, and this bill will magnify issues rather than allow the state and local governments to work together.

Alison Thomas: Voiced opposition. Used an analogy that as a mother, she knows what her children need more so than a stranger because she lives with them, in the same way local government understands community needs better than the state.

Bruce Thompson: Voiced opposition, claiming the bill removes power from the people who can directly influence their local governments, while they cannot influence administrative decisions in enforcing the bill.

Gordon Titcomb: Voiced opposition, claiming the entire state will become a city, and solutions need to be more specialized by community.

Bruce Torello: Voiced opposition, claiming the bill will force "infiltration" of section 8 housing and likens effects of the bill to communist China.

Mary Ann Turner: Voiced opposition. Testimony claimed Enfield has done extensive work to increase affordable housing and accessibility to transit, but state intervention would be excessive and ineffective.

Robert Tyler: Voiced opposition. Testimony claimed loss of local control will lead to issues such as overcrowding, overuse of water and the environment and overburden of public water and sewer.

Wendy Wescott: Voiced opposition because the bill does not address transportation.

Eugene Williams: Voiced opposition, claiming that the bill is divisive and only serves to appease Desegregate CT.

Richard S. Williams: Voiced opposition, citing value of home rule and claims, "No one will move to Ashford just because there is affordable housing! State control of zoning will not create jobs!"

Thomas C. Blatchley: Voiced opposition. The reasons for opposition include the state taking over local power to determine a 'fair share base,' vesting substantial power in Secretary of OPM to allocated obligations, and the financial burden on towns.

Mitchell Higgins: Voiced opposition. Testimony claimed loss of local control will lead to issues such as overcrowding, overuse of water and the environment and overburden of public water and sewer.

David V. Hunter: Voiced opposition. Testimony claimed that the state cannot possibly accommodate the needs of individual towns. Further, testimony stated, "I also find it to be an affront to Connecticut citizens with this strategy of packing more than 10 Bills with the hope that one will pass."

Brenda L. Kupchick, First Selectwoman of Fairfield: Voiced opposition. Testimony claimed Fairfield has, based on the voice of its people, developed housing plans. However, testimony believes the bill neglects the value of local change exemplified by Fairfield, and allows the state to enforce mandates without allowing for any conversation.

Carl Waldo: Voiced opposition. Testimony claimed the bill will contribute to lucrative bureaucratic positions, but will do nothing to actually lessen poverty.

Reported by: Colin Savino

Date: 4/7/2021