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Representative Roland Lemar

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Labriola, McCarthy Vahey,
Meskers, Michel, Morrin Bello,
O'Dea, Reyes, Rosario, Simms,
Smith, Steinberg, Thomas,
Zawistowski

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Great. Good morning, everyone. Welcome to the Transportation Committee's Public Hearing for March 8th. It's great to be with everyone after a long week. Today is a big day at, you know, legislature. We have about nine Committees that are meeting over the course of this morning and early afternoon that will likely have a lot of our members in and out of a variety of different meetings. And the whole testimony that has been received, but will be available on our website recording of this public hearing will be available and searchable for all of our members and the public as we move forward.

So, anyone who may find themselves in any one of the other Committees can certainly go back and review the testimony that we receive here today. I would like to welcome Senator Will Haskell as the new chair of the Transportation Committee, general assembly finally has its full compliment of state senators. And with that Senator Cassano will no longer have to do double duty chairing multiple Committees.

So, now we have in this Committee, our full complement of senators. Senator Haskell takes over

and he's got experience on this Committee has been before this Committee as someone who's testified before us earlier this year as well. So, he is certainly familiar with a number of the issues that are before us, this session. And we welcome him to our team. And as a, you know, a hazing ritual, I will establish for this session, we will make him take over the entirety of this public hearing today. Not allow him any break. There'll be all of his, and I would suggest that we put all the question-and-answer process onto him as well, and make sure that we give him a round welcome to the Transportation Committee. And with that, I will turn it over to him. Senator Haskell, welcome, it's fine to have you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you so much Representative Lemar, and it's great to see so many friendly and familiar faces on this Zoom. I am so tremendously honored and excited to be joining this Committee and to pick up the mantel where my good friend and colleague Senator Cassano left off, I've taken the weekend to review the Bills that this Committee has been working hard on. And each of them are so exciting and interesting. I look forward to learning more over the course of this public hearing. And of course, getting to know each of you.

So sorry, this is so last minute, I haven't had a chance to touch base with very many Committee members about their various priorities, but I look forward to doing so in the days to come. And thank you so much, Mr. Chair, should we-- oh, I guess I'll-- should I turn it back over to you Representative Lemar?

REP. LEMAR (96TH): No, I think we'll turn it over to you. We'll have Representative Carney and if Senator Somers jumps on a go, and then we'll turn it over to you to lead the public hearing today.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Sounds good. Thanks so much Representative. Representative Carney, good to see you.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Nice to see you too, Senator, thank you both so much. You know, I was kind of hoping we could go one legislative session without a chair from Fairfield County, but no, I'm just kidding. I'm kidding. So, it's great to have you Senator I'm looking forward to having a lot of discussions with you. I'm sure you know we work really well on this Committee together in a bipartisan way, always have and Representative Lemar and I have worked very well together, so I'm sure you and I will work very well together and good luck on running your first transportation meeting. So, thanks.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thanks so much Representative. And by the way, Representative Lemar, thanks so much for the honor of running this meeting, I appreciate it. I'm excited to work with you both. I don't see Senator Somers on the call, but I do want to give her a chance to say a few words if she is? All right, seeing no-- Oh, the vice chairs, would any of the vice chairs like to make any remarks before we get started? We'll start with Representative Simms.

REP. SIMMS (140TH): Good morning to you everyone. I just want to say -

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Representative I'm sorry, you went back on mute.

REP. SIMMS (140TH): I apologize. I'm in three different public hearings going on at the same time, but Senator Haskell, I just want to say congratulations, welcome to the Committee. I have full confidence that you're going to do a phenomenal job and working with Representative chairman Lemar, Representative Carney and Representatives Somers to make sure that this is the trip your Committee

continues to run smoothly as it always has. And I have full confidence that you're going to lead us going forward. So, thank you for having another colleague from Fairfield County on joining me up on the Transportation Committee. I look forward to doing some great things here. Thanks so much, sir.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Representative. It's great to see you and looking forward to working with you as well. Would the Senate vice chairman like to say a few words? Okay. Seeing none, let's move on to the public hearing. We know we've got a lot of people signed up to testify and we are looking forward to hearing their insights on the legislation before us. Up first on my list is Jack Doyle from the Division of Criminal Justice. Mr. Doyle, are you with us today?

JACK DOYLE: Yes, Senator, I'm right here. Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Good to see you. Take it away.

JACK DOYLE: You too, thank you. Chairman Lemar, Chairman Haskell, Ranking members Carney and Somers, distinguished members of the Transportation Committee. My name is Jack Doyle. I am an executive assistant state's attorney for the state Division of Criminal Justice and behalf of the division of criminal justice. I thank you for allowing me this opportunity to testify today in regards to the house Bill 6569.

I know while you have quite a list of speakers today. So, I will attempt to keep this very brief. The division of criminal justice supports house Bill 6569, an act concerning motor vehicle registration and respectfully requests the Committee's joint favorable report for this fiddle. Specifically, the division support section 2 and 3 of the Bill, which seeks to remedy the problem of residents failing to

register their motor vehicles here in the state of Connecticut.

Currently the penalty for failing to register your motor vehicle is a thousand dollar fine regardless of how long the owner has maintained residency in the state of Connecticut. This proposal seeks to revise this structure in three meaningful ways. The proposal provides that the owner of the vehicle would not have a hard deadline in which the complete registration after establishing residency, rather an owner would not be in violation so long as they have scheduled an appointment with the Department of Motor Vehicles within the first 30 days of residency. It would not require the date of the actual appointment to be within those 30 days, as long as the appointment has been made. This provides some leeway for new residents, especially in current times that perhaps through scheduling issues cannot register the vehicle within their first month of residency.

Second, it creates a tiered infraction system, so that at the owner fails to schedule an appointment to register the vehicle between 30 and 60 days of establishing residency, it would be a \$50 fine if the owner fails to schedule an appointment between 60 and 90 days after residency, it would be a \$250 fine. And lastly have more than 90 days have passed and the residents not scheduled an appointment to register the vehicle only then with the thousand dollar fine be imposed. So, it creates that structured term tier for the violator.

Finally, this Bill seeks to allow, although not require a law enforcement officers to have a vehicle towed in that circumstance where the owner has established residency within the state and failed to even schedule an appointment for registering after three months.

The division is supportive of the balance contained within this proposal to ensure that vehicles are

properly registered in the state of Connecticut also so that our municipalities may receive the property taxes and the vehicles comply with our mission requirements while lowering the initial fines for owner who fails to comply under this statute, or who fails to register or fails to make an appointment within their first two days of residency.

In conclusion, the Division of Criminal Justice supports this Bill and respectfully runs the Committees joint favorable report. We thank the Committee for affording us this opportunity to provide input on this matter, and we'd be happy to provide any additional information that the Committee might require or to answer any questions that you may have. Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you so much, Mr. Doyle for your time and for your testimony today. If Committee members just because we do have multiple pages could use the virtual raise hand function as is the practice in most other Committees, that would be helpful.

In the meantime, while Committee members may be raising their hands, I have just one question for you and that's, is there any sort of, I did have a chance to review the legislation. It doesn't seem that there's any sort of public information campaign associated with the change. Do you feel that that would be a necessary component of the Bill to let residents know about the changes that we're contemplating here?

JACK DOYLE: We would recommend that Senator just to give people the idea that it is important to register their motor vehicles. I think this body is entirely aware that, you know, one of the job of prosecutors is not only just to enforce these impression laws, but to encourage people to register motor vehicles. I mean, that is part of the process when people go through and receive these infractions and the current, I'm sure you're wearing the current

state of affairs a lot of this is being addressed remotely as the judicial branch is operating kind of on a limited basis.

So we're not exactly bringing a lot of people in the courthouses to address this, but I think a campaign such as that would be appropriate because especially if a and I believe it'd be the intention of this body, if you pass this Bill to encourage prosecutors, when you get to the person in that third stage, who's just not registering that motor vehicle to enforce that heavy fine, right now, a lot of people claim it's disparaging to be confronted with such a huge fine with what might be an inability to schedule an appointment with a lot of other things that are going on and regular citizens lives. So, I do think would be important to have some kind of a campaign to let people know that. Yes.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you so much for that answer. I see that Representative Carney has his hand raised. Representative.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, thank you, Jack, for your testimony. I just, I guess my one question is this Bill is pretty much a result of some of the issues we've been hearing really in the Waterbury area predominantly I've heard from the Waterbury legislators about this issue. Do you think this will really reduce the numbers of illegal registrations that they're seeing in places like Waterbury or, you know, well, these are, and I guess, will it make it easier to catch and find these people that are illegally registering their cars?

JACK DOYLE: Well, in addition to any public relations campaigns to the public there, I think that if this Bill was to be passed as intended here, I think it also would involve as educating police officers and motor vehicle enforcement officers to understand that tiered level of the situation there.

So, if they're facing somebody, a citizen or resident who obviously after the 90 day period, hasn't made any efforts or any appointments to do this, we're now at the situation where that fines is going to be imposed.

And if there's-- for lack of a better term, a message between DMV and the DCJ and police agencies, that those are the severe violators that we have to follow. Then I do think it would properly enforce that, but it would also put notice to people that they need to get compliance, or at least make that appointment within the first 90 days.

I do think that is important to have that message out there, but it's also going to be important you know, to educate officers when they do this, that they have to really watch out for that person beyond that 90 day period. And we are aware, you know, this was Representative DiGiovancarlo, who did bring this to our attention. I mean, I think he was one of the sponsors, or at least the promoters of this particular Bill. And we do realize it is a bigger issue situation in that greater Waterbury area as well.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Okay. I appreciate that. You know, like I said, I mean this issue, I think I've been here seven years, I think it's come up every year. So, I'd really like to try to push something that will at least solve the problem to a degree. So, I appreciate your testimony, it means a lot to the Committee and it was very helpful to us as we move this Bill forward.

JACK DOYLE: Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thanks so much Representative Carney. I see that Representative Meskers has this and raise as well. Representative.

REP. MESKERS (150TH): Thank you. Sorry. I've well been jumping between Committee meetings, so thank

you to welcome to our new co-chair and as also a Fairfield resident on my muscle in on that. I have a question for Mr. Doyle, you know, I've heard the issues, I'm, you know, I'm newer to the legislature. This is my second term. I do believe that there is an outstanding issue, and I don't think that we've done enough in public service announcements related to the insurance and your liability.

And I think if you're misrepresenting your residency to avoid the car tax, I'm assuming your insurance registration reflects the exact same or misrepresentation. So, I'm not sure whether you're putting yourself at risk for insurance liability. So, if you could comment, or if you're aware of that?

JACK DOYLE: What I'll comment Representative is that, if you are trying to avoid the tax and that at the same time, register your vehicle in another state, you're obviously not being straightforward with your own insurance company as to where you're residing. Okay. Insurance rates in situations, I'm not an insurance lawyer or insurance agent, but there are going to be calculated based on what your town of residency and your location. So, if you have a vehicle registered at upstate and you're actually residing here in the state of Connecticut, that could affect your insurance policies or could affect it one way or the other. So, I do think that is part of the enforcement here in order to keep -

REP. MESKERS (150TH): Yeah.

JACK DOYLE: Clients.

REP. MESKERS (150TH): Nope, but I think what my point is not so much, like obviously the rates and the manipulation of the rates, we need to delve a little bit further. I sit on the insurance Committee and I think it's a public service announcement and people are looking at this and whether it's advertent or inadvertent, they may be at risk of

losing or their coverage, not in being invalidated in the case they have an accident. If they're misrepresenting where they're residing, we'd find out that information and make that part of the public service announcement. If that's the case that not only, are you subject to fines, but if you're in a life-threatening accident, you may find your insurance coverage disallowed.

JACK DOYLE: Yeah.

REP. MESKERS (150TH): That's important. Right. So, we need to, I think we need to go through that as well. That would be my only suggestion. Okay.

JACK DOYLE: I can't disagree with that, sir. I would agree with that.

REP. MESKERS (150TH): Thanks.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thanks so much, Representative Meskers. Mr. Doyle, I don't see any further questions from the Committee today, so we thank you for your time and for your testimony.

JACK DOYLE: Thank you, Senator, have a good day both.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Have a great day. Next, we'll hear from Christopher Edge from the town of Berlin. Is Mr. Edge with us today?

PHIL MAINIERO: Mr. Chair, it does not appear Mr. Edge is with us. It seems the next person available on our list is Mr. Robert Powell, who is in the room with us.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Wonderful, Mr. Powell from the town of Tolland. Welcome.

ROBERT POWELL: Good morning. Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide some testimony and maybe a couple of questions in regards to the

proposals for a Bill 6570. Without question the proposals that are here are going to have different impacts for different towns and in the city of Tolland, excuse me, the town of Tolland, we have identified that affordable housing is absolutely critical to our continued success as a community. We have made those changes in our most recent POCD. We have actually already had increased requirements for affordable housing in a zone that does hold well, I guess we would consider it to be a transportation hub.

The town has a commuter lot that is right off of 84, and we're very concerned in terms of some of the wording in the proposed Bill. The first question is what is the true definition of a transit station, a transit station, excuse me. We have a covered vestibule, but considering that we are at the end of the 913 lines, it comes in from Hartford and then goes over to UCONN, we're concerned that that might be one of the five that is actually designated it for a targeted zone.

The secondary question that we then have is if that little vestibule is considered to be a transit station, how is this going to be implemented in terms of the half mile radius, that half mile radius around that commuter law contains six different zones including our TVA zone, our gateway district, our general residential district, and also our historic zone. If this sort of use has that applied as a right of use, the impact of multiple zones is going to be felt across to the town.

Does this legislation basically put a half mile zone as a whole in Tolland that does not apply to anywhere else? Because if we do right of use inside of these zones, wouldn't that therefore go across all of the zones wherever they're implemented, that has very great concerns for us, because most of our town, more than 90% of it does not have city sewer does not have city water and does not have the infrastructure to support the additional demands,

that large scale development, which this kind of can be implemented.

So, we're very concerned about the full application of the law or the change of regulations. My coffee has not kicked in yet. And we're kind of very, we're very concerned that now this control is out of our area by making it right of use, the public hearing option is now gone by making it right of use, there are considerations that go into concern for the dynamics of the community in terms of our ability to respond with our public services and our education system. And we believe that the right of use doesn't give the town the ability to really control its own destiny.

As I've said, the town of Tolland absolutely recognizes the need for affordable housing. We have actively engaged with CT and it's desegregated CT. We've actually hosted them in one of our planning zoning meetings. We're just concerned about the long-term impact that may actually happen to a smaller town that will be on the transportation system that we have. And we'd like to understand how this can be done without public hearing locally.

And then I guess the other question that I have is with right of use, how does this then get applied to wetlands that are currently in place? How does this apply to historical districts that are in place? You know, and does this therefore, because it touches a listed district or ballistic zone, does that then mean as a right of use? Does that then get applied to the same zone in areas that are outside of that half mile district, that half mile identification, thank you very much for your time. If there are any questions, I'd be happy to stay, or I appreciate your engagement in this topic.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thanks so much Mr. Powell, for your testimony today and providing the perspective from the town of Tolland. I would like to turn to Representative of O'Dea.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, new chairman glad to see my Senator is now the chair co-chair of transportation. And I know we agree a lot on a lot of things, and hopefully we agree on this legislation. Mr. Powell, I greatly appreciate your testimony. I am adamantly vociferously opposed to this legislation for the exactly the reasons that you have articulated.

And I'm very concerned that Hartford dictates what goes on in Tolland or New Canaan or anywhere else with a stick rather than a carrot. So, I guess my question to you is I can't answer your questions. My understanding and reading the proposed legislation is that it's as of right, and you know Tolland will be out of luck. If the builder comes in and proposes some legislation like this, but I know Representative Lemar is going to correct this hopefully, and work with us on a bipartisan basis to make it a better legislation. But let me ask how many transit oriented developments are in Tolland or transit oriented potential developments are in Tolland?

ROBERT POWELL: Well, there is the one zone, the one location, which is off of exit 67, which is a commuter lot. And there has been proposals to move that to a different location, to be able to allow additional development, which could include multi-family or affordable housing, but in regards to transportation, I mean, I've got two gas stations at Dunkin donuts, that's next to that commuter lot I guess those are transportation-related, but that's all that there is right there.

However, that half mile radius affects five different zones that if placed into right of use, because we have an RDD or a regular residential district, if it applies to that RDD section in that half mile area that RDD change that affects the entire town. So, what starts out is just a whole in

Tolland where that would apply. It actually affects almost the entire community.

So it's not just about transit. And we absolutely appreciate, and being a community that has a number of our people that go into Hartford that go into the Western part of the state transportation has been seen as a public trace Chester station has been seen as one of those elements that folks are looking at. And we know that if additional affordable housing comes in and we're working to do that, there'll be a lot of younger folks that would be looking to go into Hartford because they're having their first or second jobs, or perhaps they're working at Hartford hospital as a healthcare professional.

We don't have the infrastructure built up with this sort of what's a sort of transit oriented plan. So besides a Dunkin donuts and a couple of gas stations we don't have anything and this could potentially affect us rather dramatically.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Thank you very much, Mr. Powell and thank you, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate that.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Of course, good to see you on this Committee Representative, looking forward to working with you. Next is Representative Thomas, followed by Representative Zawistowski.

REP. THOMAS (143RD): Thank you, Mr. Chair, let me say welcome as another Fairfield County Representative. I'm so happy to see you here and thank you, Mr. Powell for being here today. I so appreciate the thoughtful approach that you have taken in your town to recognizing that makes it work for Tolland specifically.

And you touched upon something that raised concerns for me when I read this Bill. And that's your POCD, your Plan of Conservation and Development. This Bill references the state's plan. And I know when my district each of the towns in my district have spent

years with community focus groups and writing our own POCD, something that the entire community had a chance to weigh in on over like a three and four year period. And I'm just curious if you have any thoughts, if you've had the opportunity to compare your POCD to the state's POCD, my personal fear is that it's more outdated and less focused on thoughtful growth locally and conservation needs that may be specific to the locality. Do you have any thoughts about how that requirement might run afoul of your own plan?

REBERT POWELL: In terms of looking at and Representative, thank you very much for your question in looking at the POCD and you're absolutely right. They do go through phases. The previous one, which was dated in 2009, had envisioned a development that was really village oriented. It looked at the development of small commercial and small areas that people could go to trying to capture some of the traffic that was coming through 84, and then the economic downturn happened and things that really came into play that caused the rural change of commercial, especially retail commercial in smaller communities. And as we got the 2019, we recognize that this idealic vision was not the economic reality.

I'll be very honest and say, we are so tied and so committed to our community that in many cases, we don't look up to see what the state is doing, because we're really responsible to our to the folks that are in our towns and also in our region, because we do talk to the other planning and zoning regions to figure out how can we work together being a Northeast, you know, town it's much more difficult to attract folks to come to the town, not only from a tourism standpoint, but from a commercial standpoint and also a residential standpoint.

But going to your point in terms of timeliness, we recognize that our plans were woefully inadequate in terms of the new realities. Those new realities have

even been even more changed with the pandemic. So, we recognized locally that we needed to move to instead of just being a bedroom community, but to have more full spectrum community. And we were targeting particular areas that were close to existing resources for affordable housing.

So I know that we're doing it because we have the visibility in terms of our area. I know that we have talked to other regions, but I believe that with the spectrum that the state has in regards to different residential economic, and social realities, it's vision cannot be applied locally. You know, perhaps regionally, perhaps in a county, there may be some real vision given down to the realities in the town, but there's just no way that from Hartford you can be able to apply something that would be equitable to Tolland as it would be equitable to Berlin or Fairfield or East Hartford, or even Willimantic. It just isn't, doesn't seem to be fair and it doesn't seem to be doable.

REP. THOMAS (143RD): Thank you so much for that, I couldn't agree more. And as a former zoning commissioner, I think you, for all of your hard work, I know it's not easy. Thank you for your time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

ROBERT POWELL: Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Representative Thomas. Next we'll go to Representative Zawistowski, followed by Senator Cassano.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and welcome to the Transportation Committee. Mr. Powell, thank you very much for coming in today. And committing to testimony as well as actually appearing on this Zoom meeting. You brought up some really good points concerning some of our smaller towns, especially the well and septic where additional units may not be feasible as well as bringing out the fact that nothing would get a

public hearing if with as of right. A question for you. Do you see the second part of this Bill where you're reorganizing the zoning is actually doing anything to help with affordable housing?

ROBERT POWELL: You know, it's and thank you very much for the question. The honest answer is no. The honest answer is that we, when we, the TVA area, which is our zone, that's near our transportation, we'd actually placed a recommendation that there be 20% affordable housing in the multi-family development that we were considering. And we attracted in the eight years of that zone, that is the closest to the commercial lot. We had attracted one developer that had come forward with a proposal of that going through the changes became less and less applicable to the zone that it was in.

So I don't really see this as increasing the potential of affordable housing in the town and actually forces us to at right of use in other districts that wouldn't even be close to where that transit hub is. Did that answer your question?

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Yes, it did. Thank you very much. I represent three towns. One of which is Windsor that has a train station and market forces. I've made it very rather than a top-down approach have created a lot of development in that area. And I think that's one of the natural processes that could occur without the state getting involved in trying this whole approach where, you know, they're telling, they're telling people where this affordable housing should be.

ROBERT POWELL: Right.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): I also represent Suffield, which is within a half a mile of a proposed new train station in Enfield. Now this half mile radius, I think, is going to turn problematic when you start crossing town lines, even the Connecticut river, I mean, you have a mile of the new Enfield train

stations going in is protected farmland. You know, there's a lot of thought that that really needs to go into any program like this.

You know, my other observation is if you're going to be reorganizing the zoning act, this should be in the Planning and Development Committee. I've spent six years on this is my seventh year on both of those Committees. We have heard 8-2 reorganization in Planning and Development for most of those years, this Bill does not belong here. And I really think that a lot more thought should be given to this versus just trying to cram as of right zoning into a cookie cutter radius. Would you tend to agree Mr. Powell?

ROBERT POWELL: Yes, I would. The concept of, you know, or the dovetailing of transportation and housing there's a natural synergy there, you know, wanting to be able to take advantage of an existing transport infrastructure is a fantastic use. I mean, I'd much rather have people taking mass transit when I have to drive into Hartford, because I don't have a schedule that really ties to that. There'll be fewer people on the road. There'll be less gas being used, you know, mass transit does absolutely have its benefits.

However, it's the consideration of right of use inside of districts that do not apply to that half mile radius. That is very concerning. And I think your point is exactly right, because of this rezoning or this change in how we can use land. The impact goes much farther away than just transportation. And it should be part of that POCD process that you had mentioned. We would be wholeheartedly involved in that. And we'd like to be involved in that to be able to give a perspective that is of the Northeast, but also of the smaller towns that really aren't part of the main mass transit infrastructure, even though we have a small element of it.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Thank you for that. And, you know, the, I mean, my personal feeling is rather than this top-down approach, the market should be able to take care of housing when it makes sense to do so. I just it's you just don't want to force this town's throat, it removes the local control of you can't, you know, if you're not having public hearings -

ROBERT POWELL: Right.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): I had many, many issues with this. And Mr. Powell, I want to thank you very much for coming in today. Tolland is a wonderful town. I grew up in Stafford, so I'm familiar with it, and I appreciate that. And Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

REP. POWELL: Actually, Mr. Chairman, if I could make just a quick comment to -

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): No problem at all.

ROBERT POWELL: The Representative's question. We are one of 169 wonderful towns in the state of Connecticut, but we do appreciate the call-out. I would like to look at this as an opportunity instead of having a top-down command and control model is to actually have an incentive model. If you are able to do this, then X, Y, Z, rather than you must do this without regard to the elements that they come into the town. So perhaps an incentive model would be more appropriate, and that would actually help the economic model that would then drive the development of a multifamily and potentially mixed use, because that will come along with that as you have more families living in a community that increases the economic benefit of having that a small commercial giving more jobs to local folks as well. So, I would like to take a look at incentive rather than directive coming from the state.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Thank you again, Mr. Powell, and thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Of course. Thank you so much Representative, and thank you, Mr. Powell, don't go anywhere. You're a popular guy this morning. Next, we'll hear from Senator Cassano followed by Representative Devlin.

ROBERT POWELL: Thank you.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ROBERT POWELL: I can't hear him.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Yes, Senator. I think you may be back on mute.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Should be good here.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): There we go.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): There we go. First of all, congratulations. It's great having you as a co-chair.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you very much, sir. Big shoes to fill.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): And this doesn't help you with certain automobile dealerships, you know, just a quick comment Mr. Powell thank you for coming in. I'm curious I know Tolland well living in Manchester that was out at your market Sunday -

ROBERT POWELL: Thank you.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): A great little place to colonial market there. Transportation services, I find it interesting that you actually have a bus stop the Boston to New York bus line. I believe it is has a regular stop at the, one of the fast food restaurants there off of-

ROBERT POWELL: Correct.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Is that listed, issued as a transportation spot? How does that get listed? Because you do have you a commute. I don't know how you'd define it. But I find it was interesting.

ROBERT POWELL: That's a perfectly legitimate question, Senator. How do you define a transportation station? The vestibule that is at 67, the vestibule that's at 68. There is no delineation. Now one could think that, oh, that's a physical building where there are restrooms and other things that are there, but that is not directly called out, which brings into consideration the questions that we have on this. And as it is transportation, how could that then apply to the zoning regulations that we have that affect the rest of our town?

So, yeah, I mean, a location whether it'd be 67 or 68 we're most concerned about the exit 68 location, because it basically goes through five different districts, including the historical district that the town green in place. So there's not a lot of clarity here that we would like to have called out so that there can be a better conversation about the impact both negative and positive for the communities that will come into play.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): And that is why I raised the question. I think Representative Zawistowski was absolutely correct. As much as I don't need another controversial issue in P and D they belongs in Planning and Development. It belongs in part of a comprehensive zoning package review of not just Tolland to the situation at Tolland, but a review of zoning and how these situations fill in. So thank you for coming in. I appreciate it.

ROBERT POWELL: Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thanks so much, Senator Cassano. Very briefly. We're going to go to Representative Lemar and then Representative Devlin.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you Mr. Powell for your testimony today. I just want to make sure we're clearing up a few things with what the building which says and what the representation of what the building, which says one, the first section, section 1. I think that's what you're concerned about. The identical patient of five transit stations with assistant parking lot was owned by the state and would require the department, the commissioner of transportation to issue a request for information for the construction of a transit oriented development on such parking lots. That does not have anything to do with your concern about underlying local zoning and changes to that.

That is contained in a follow up section that requiring 50% of the area within a half mile radius of a bus rapid transit station or passenger railroad station. That is, those are separate considerations. And so you would not have to worry about the vestibule in Tolland being the fight for the RFP that, you know, we can maybe clarify what that transportation is under that terminology under section 1, where we talk about the underlying 50% of an area within one half mile radius, it is a bus rapid transit station or a passenger railroad station. So those are two separate considerations. I just want to make sure we're clear on the terminology and what we're considering what some of the concerns are.

And again, nothing in this legislation would change underlying treatment for protected farm lands. It wouldn't change how the health of public health code or buildable lands. Like none of that actually is a consideration. And I think sometimes we get you know, instead of understanding the underlying obligations we have as planning and zoning

commissioners or at the state level, you know, and that's, I think maybe to the point of why this is integration between transportation and Planning and Development is that there are different responsibilities and the terminology can confuse as we go across Committees, may not understand the underlying impacts of the legislation.

So, I just want to clarify those few facts, nothing in this Bill changes your ability to build on a wetland, nothing in this Bill changes your ability to regulate open spaces within your community, if you want it to do 50% of the area of half mile within a bus rapid transit station, which you don't have in Tolland, or a railroad station, which you don't have in Tolland, you could simply just do right of use on the property through family homes, and you'd be fully compliant with that section.

This is am not a dramatic changing of the world that I think people are reading into it. It's really small scale. In fact, it's much smaller than what they do in entire states across the country. This would be really small pilot programs in and around transit stations. And define that for you. So, you're investing on Tolland is appropriately defined rather than a source of major concern that the underlying zoning in your town is dramatically changed. With that explanation, I just want to make sure we're talking about the same things. And I thank you for your testimony, and I look forward to working with you as we go forward.

ROBERT POWELL: Representative, I greatly appreciate the attempt to clarification. And it is a concern for ours because the definitions are not very clear. And I appreciate your willingness to provide us with some sense of calm that this is something that's not going to happen to all places at all points. And you're absolutely right, if it is a wetland those are the, there are federal protections that do come into play. It is just our concern that when you add, as of right to zoning, that changes our ability to

do things and not just today, but in the future Tolland had been considered as the final point for the first program or the new bus lines that were being considered east and west from Hartford.

So what we have is a scenario that, hey, we're going to expand that rapid bus line and make it come out to Tolland, now this applies. It's just a point of concern for us that being on a major artery in the town, in the state, and also being a gateway to UCONN as well, where absolutely mass transit and public transportation can be a target for those folks around the area to be able to get to both Hartford and the Hartford campus and the summers campus, my son takes the 913 bus from UCONN to Hartford. So it's our concern about the future direction and the impact that it can have. And it's, you know, that's why we're looking to get clarity on this, because there is some ambiguity in terms of timing. And we also understand that this is a pilot, but there has to be a long-term view on this as well. So, but thank you for your concern and your clarification.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you. And I appreciate it again, that as of right consideration would not apply under any definition from the town of Tolland and the vestibule area that you have identified that is simply in the area around the bus rapid station and a passenger railroad station. You are correct that if Tolland decided they needed-- they wanted a bus rapid station in their community, then it would apply. That would be the scenario, I think, where your concern about the underlying zoning on along multifamily housing, half a mile radius, potential bus stop station, wouldn't be acted at the moment. Thank you though. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Representative Lemar. Thank you, Mr. Powell. Representative Devlin, great to see you on this Committee. Fairfield county is indeed well-represented here today.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, it's been a pleasure to be continuously serving on this Committee and nice to see you in your new role. Mr. Powell, I really appreciated listening to your testimony. I couldn't find your written testimony. Did you submit anything?

ROBERT POWELL: I did not, being this my first time doing a testimony, I think I may have missed a point. But I, you know, hopefully I'll have that ability to able to put that into the record -

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Absolutely.

ROBERT POWELL: But I like to talk rather than write, so I guess this works out fine.

REP. DELVIN (134TH): No, that's fair game. I wanted to make sure I didn't miss anything. And I was actually looking for it to reference back, but, you know, I would agree with some of my colleagues. I also am very hard pressed to find how this piece of legislation fits within the Transportation Committee, despite the clear support from one of our chairs on this matter. It is part of a far broader agenda that rather than being introduced to the legislature in a comprehensive Bill has really been broken up into little pieces. So it is hitting transportation, housing planning, and development, finance, and education. So a way to get little pieces of an agenda through without seeing the broader picture.

I was particularly interested in the comments that you were making. And I also agree, I find multiple troubling aspects about this and some vagaries in the Bill. But you mentioned that you were rather than being forced, you would prefer an incentive model. So my question is in this effort to remove home rule and centralized zoning decisions within Hartford, that somehow has made its way into transportation. Why would you even need an incentive model versus market-driven? Can you just speak to

that? I thought you were talking about some positive things that your community was doing. Maybe Hartford doesn't feel that that's enough, but why do-- what kind of incentive do you need and to do what if you're not already operating based on what the market demands?

ROBERT POWELL: You know, that there's a good question there, and I appreciate your engagement and also the, you know, it's awesome to see the different parts of Connecticut working in conjunction, being in the Southwest part, hearing the concerns of the Northeast part of the state. We appreciate your engagement and really looking to team on those to getting to the right point.

The question of incentives could be either incentives for a developer. They could be incentives that could be applied for a community. They could be incentives towards the application of other elements. And you brought this up in terms of affordable housing being moved and addressed in numerous departments. There's a proposal there that talks about a mill rate increase. If a community does not have a certain amount of affordable housing, which is in a town like Tolland beyond damaging, beyond punitive, beyond regressive the data that we've seen that was on the desegregate CT site showed that for Tolland to achieve a 10% affordable housing level that we would have to build a thousand affordable housing units.

And even in our greatest growth period, back in the nineties and early two thousands where Tolland was building 285, 300 units a year. We were the fastest growing community in Connecticut. It would take us decades to do this. And in the meantime, that 0.2% mill rate increase that was being proposed would be punitive on us going forward. So you're absolutely right, in terms of looking at affordable housing, going across multiple areas, perhaps that incentive could be used to mitigate that sort of a tax increase that comes into play.

But going back to the main point market forces absolutely will drive availability and success because it's one thing to build something it's another to have it being an integrated part of the community, the expanding community. So that can be very seriously taken advantage of. We have a new development that may come into town that does include affordable housing that is actually even more responsible to the community because it's within walking distances of our main economic sources like grocery stores and cleaners and banks, and, you know, in doctor's offices.

So I think that the concept of incentives does need to be looked at, but I still think that the idea of encouraging affordable housing is something that we absolutely want to do, but in some cases, the affordability or the efficacy of the economics for developer, it just doesn't happen for them. And maybe that incentive could be applied to encourage that developer, to be able to take that extra step, to take that risk, to actually put it there. So, you know, if you're going to look at incentives, let's look at incentives in a holistic standpoint, and let's also take a look at that, the point about all these changes being really moved back to the planning and with the P and D cycle that the state really needs to go through. Did I answer your question?

REP. DELVIN (134TH): You did, thank you. I appreciate your explanation very much, and I couldn't agree more that this should not be in front of this Committee, but thanks so much for your time and engagement today. I appreciate it.

ROBERT POWELL: Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Representative Devlin and Mr. Powell, thank you for your time and for your testimony today. We greatly appreciate it.

I don't see any further questions from Committee members, but I hope that you stay healthy.

ROBERT POWELL: Well, Thank you very much. And thank you for all that you've done as a fellow elected official. There's a weight and a burden that we didn't expect. And I think that Connecticut has done an exceptional job, and we look forward to being part of this discussion going forward. Thank you very much for your time and efforts.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you very much, sir. Next, we will return to somebody who I think might've been having technical difficulties earlier. That's Christopher Edge from the town of Berlin.

CHRISTOPHER EDGE: Thank you so very much. I appreciate it. Senator Cassano, Representative Lemar, Senator Somers, Representative Simms, Senator Miner, Representative Carney, and esteem members of Transportation Committee. My name is Chris Edge on the Economic Development Director of the town of Berlin and advocate for creative reuse of properties, as well as non-traditional solutions to move communities ahead.

I'm concerned with some of the Bill and language in 6570, it requires 50% of the area within a half mile of a bus rapid transit or passenger railroad station to allow for as of right accessory apartments, residential buildings, at least four units or mixed use buildings that allow drawing units, conditions at each station and every community are different depending upon where they lie. Creating the 50% rule for multi-family at least four units seems to be arbitrary.

In Berlin, what's the land within a half mile to the train station is zoned and used for industrial purposes. The half mile radius also bleeds into existing single family neighborhoods. Our development strategy in the town of Berlin around the train station has been to allow multi-family and

mixed use development in a more compact area. Autonomous approved a mixed use project with 72 apartments adjacent to the station, as well as recently, a 16 unit property committed density that was increased from 26 units, an acre from less than 10 units an acre around our train station.

Berlin will be updating its plan of conservation and development in mid-2023. And we anticipate that the process will offer other zoning changes to permit more multifamily uses in the vicinity of the train station. There was an advocate of multifamily housing near transit hubs, but we do not believe it was appropriate for this to be accomplished by state mandate that does not consider the local conditions.

At present, Berlin has approximately 9.3% of its units that are qualified affordable housing, and is currently 62 units short of achieving the 10% threshold after obtaining two certificates of housing completion, including 2% progress each toward the 10% goal, but also recently proven ADA mixed use mixed income project from the rural housing authority is now securing approval for a 50 unit senior affordable housing projects. We expect these projects will help Berlin and achieve the 10% affordable housing golden near future.

I ask your assistance to reevaluating this Bill as written because it doesn't take into account the various land use conditions that exist in the vicinity of transit hubs. And to some degree, it takes away local planning authority, and discretion regarding the best ways to get additional housing and train disorient development areas. Thank you very much for your time and consideration and for everything you do.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thanks so much, Mr. Edge. I have just a very quick question for you. Oh, I see other members committed to as well. So I will beg their indulgence briefly. And just say, we heard that the previous speaker mentioned incentives. What

sort of incentive is there any sort of incentive that would entice Berlin to move in this direction? And is that a direction that you'd prefer to see the Bill go? I guess I'm asking if so, what would that look like?

CHRISTOPHER EDGE: Incentives could be helpful. I don't know exactly what those would be at this point. I mean, we are working hard to get there to that point. I think probably looking at the area itself and what would make the most sense instead of saying you will do this area, just because again, if you look at the town of Berlin, like many communities they've been around for a while, there was no strategic planning. They just kind of happened as they happened with the huge amount of single family housing as well, industrial.

I think we need to look at it and go, okay, what would make sense for the community in partnership with the state? I wish I had an answer for you, incentive wise. I don't, at this point, I think it is definitely worth a discussion and to see what we can make work here in the community, because I know too, yes, we have a news are almost 10%, but there's still a need.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): I apologize, sir. I just muted one of our members and anyways, I do appreciate that answer. And certainly warrants further discussion at some point. But in the meantime I see Representative Devlin has her hand raised. Representative.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you very much, Mr. Edge. I appreciate your testimony today. You are from the town of Berlin, is that correct?

CHRISTOPHER EDGE: Yes.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Okay. So just a couple of things first to some of the things that you exactly

you know mentioned which I thought was really relevant. And again, here we are talking about housing in the Transportation Committee, but and zoning for that matter. And you're right, right? Each community is different and unique. Which I think is why the fact that we have home rule in our state is really important as opposed to, you know, one size fits all mandated regulations that come from Hartford across 169, very, very different communities.

But I didn't hear, you mentioned, and I'm sorry if I missed it related to section 1 where the DLT, actually, this does involve the Department of Transportation and Transit Stations that there would be five locations identified. Now we don't know what those are. So it's very vague at this point, but I believe in terms of those stations or parking lots that the DOT owns, one of them is in Berlin. Is that correct?

CHRISTOPHER EDGE: Yes, it is. And actually I didn't have that in there. I would welcome a conversation about that. I believe that at present the size of the parking lot is a lot bigger than what I think the station needs and would love to be able to have a conversation to see what can fit in there. Because of that, because we definitely would like to see additional development around the train station happened to be the development of 76 units happened to be a place to the town townhome, and we ended up getting it.

And I give everybody a lot of credit, a lot of state support. We had received monies for brown fields. I mean, we had worked with OPM DOTD ECD and the governor's office to make this project happen. So I know that partnership between the town of Berlin and the state agencies has happened and can happen. So I would welcome a conversation about that because it is important to look at that and maybe this fits in with it, which would be more of the conversation

side versus the, you will, which it seems the Bill is written as.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Right. And it sounds like, although there, again, a lot of vagaries and in this particular section that there would be a request for information, right. Hang on a minute, let me go back to this specifically regarding a plan. So that would potentially include affordable housing up to 20%. And I would guess being state-owned land, the community wouldn't necessarily benefit from any property tax that would, is that correct? Being on a state owned lot, or would that go to the town of Berlin?

CHRISTOPHER EDGE: I do not know at this point to tell you the truth, that probably would be part of the discussion with each community, because my guess is the community would probably like to receive something tax wise. But I think if it's state land, I would say we probably would not receive taxes, but I think that definitely should be part of the discussion.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Right.

CHRISTOPHEY EDGE: And maybe that's part of the incentive that Senator Haskell had mentioned. Maybe that's part of it, which is the taxes from that project would go to the community.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Got it. Okay, good. Well, I'm certainly eager to hear more about that as well. But I do appreciate hearing your testimony and I share some of your concerns. So thank you very much.

CHRISTOPHER EDGE: Thank you, Representative Devlin.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you so much, Representative. Next, we'll hear from Representative Tom O'Dea.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. And sir, thank you very much, Mr. Edge for your testimony. I know that it's not online. Is this, did you submit online testimony?

CHRISTOPHER EDGE: I submitted it this morning. I had a couple of edits to it and I apologize. I mean, literally it probably was, but I hit the office at 8:30 and it will be there hopefully to everybody's inbox. And I apologize for that.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): No, not at all. I just want to make sure if you were going to submit it, that it got submitted. I appreciate it. I'm just looking through the Berlin's plan of conservation development which you know, it's 156 pages back from what was it? September 1st, 2013-

CHRISTOPHER EDGE: Yes.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Adoption date. Okay. So obviously Berlin spent a lot of time and resources in creating that plan of conservation development. And the next one I entered, as I understand it is for 2013.

CHRISTOPHER EDGE: Yeah. 2023 will be our next one.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Yeah, 10 years. And so I understand that the people of Berlin think that they know what is best for Berlin. Correct?

CHRISTOPHER EDGE: They would say as much. Yes. I mean, I think having the local say is vitally important. Yes.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): And you're 0.7% away from a 10% affordable housing in Berlin, is that correct?

CHRISTOPHER EDGE: Yes, that was our last calculation. Yes, we were at 9.3.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): But that's obviously an improvement and I congratulate you on that. How much does Berlin and then your role is as the economic development director?

CHRISTOPHER EDGE: Yes, it is.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): And do you do you know the costs associated with developing affordable housing versus not developing affordable housing? In other words, is there a higher cost to developing affordable housing? I imagine there is, but have you found that to be true?

CHRISTOPHER EDGE: I think there is to some degree of higher cost. I know that we just had the two different developments, one which was brought forward for affordable versus not being affordable. I think it may be a little more expensive, but I don't think it's dramatically so, at least not from what I saw from the last couple of projects.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): The rent that you get, or a builder gets from affordable is less than the rent that you would get from a non-affordable. Is that fair to say?

CHRISTOPHER EDGE: Yes, it is.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): So, if this Bill, instead of mandating it, the state were to offer reimbursements of costs and rent differential as an incentive to developing affordable housing. Do you think that might be a better idea?

CHRISTOPHER EDGE: I think that definitely would be helpful for the developer. I'm not sure from the town perspective how that would fit in, but I think that definitely would make a difference. Yes.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): But if the builder had to comply with the zoning regs so that there was local

control of how that development was created, that would be better for the town. Correct?

CHRISTOPHER EDGE: Absolutely.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): So, I guess my offer to my good friend and proponent of the Bill would be, if I were advising or had any input, I would make this a voluntary program that had state reimbursement for increased cost of build and loss of rent for a period of time, but require input from the local towns zoning agencies. And if it ultimately was the collaboration, as opposed to, as of right, is that something that you believe you and in many in town of Berlin could support?

CHRISTOPHER EDGE: Yes. I think that collaboration piece is important and we are looking to get to the 10% or above it. I mean, that is our goal and why we've worked hard at it. So, yes, I think in collaboration would make a lot more sense instead of saying you will do this because again, we, especially with the investment the state has made around the train station. We believe additional development should happen. Both how's it getting mixed use and it would be working together much like the project that we are going to be breaking ground on the 22nd.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Great. Well, Mr. Edge, thank you very much to your service to your residents of Berlin and for your testimony here today. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHRISTOPHER EDGE: Thank you, Representative O'Dea.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Representative O'Dea. Before you go, Mr. Edge, I believe Representative Lemar has a question or comment.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you, Mr. Edge for your testimony today, and thank you for your work on behalf of the town of

Berlin. And I've been in meetings with you and conferences where you presented on a lot of the work that your town has done in and around the train station. I mean, sorry, the bus rapid train-- bus rapid station. And I'm very thankful for the amount of time and effort and energy you've put in. I know that process locally was not particularly easy. I know you had to do a lot of education on the ground to get community, to get, you know, fully bought in. And I do appreciate the amount of time and effort you've put into this.

You are seen as a leader on so much of the economic development proposals that we confront as a state your work across multiple jurisdictions, whether it's local communities that are small and rural or larger towns, you're seeing as a well-respected professional by everyone. So, I do appreciate a lot of the comments and concerns you bring up here today. And I think you hit on a few points that I want to highlight as we leave this hearing. There's going to be disagreement over this and particularly the parts of this that are zoning related. I understand.

But I think you did highlight something that I want to reiterate over and over again, we are not maximizing the land in and around our transit stations, particularly on the state owned side. And we need to, whether it's obligated or voluntary or incentives or directives, if we're going to make multi-million dollar investments on multi-billion dollar assets of our state, we should do everything we can to drive development into those areas and ensure we're maximizing their use. It's not common. What we have in Connecticut, where we have this restricted access, train stations, almost like country club, train stations, where you have to live in the town to be able to park near the station and you can't live anywhere near the station because we don't allow, we actually don't allow market forces to decide what kind of land use is there. We use

zoning restrictions. It's the same you can live near there.

So I think that the part of it that is about maximizing the seed investment is core to this conversation. And I know you've been a leader in legally, and I know that that is the real bulk of this conversation that we're all committed to. And how do we move that forward. I just want to thank you for your leadership on a multitude of issues in Berlin. Thank you.

CHRISTOPHER EDGE: Thank you, Representative Lemar. I greatly appreciate that.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Mr. Edge. Thank you. Representative Lemar. I don't see any further questions at this time. So we thank you, sir, for your time and for your testimony.

CHRISTOPHER EDGE: Thank you so much. And I do appreciate it as well.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Next, we will go to the good Representative from the 74th district in Waterbury.

REP. MICHAEL DICIOVANCARLO: Chairman Lemar, chairman Haskell, vice-chair Simms, vice chair Cassano, and esteemed members of the Transportation Committee. I am a state Representative, Michael DiGiovancarlo and I'm here today to kindly urge your strong consideration and support of house Bill 6569 an act concerning motor vehicle registration.

I have submitted written testimony that I hope you will review. Representative Napoli, Representative Rayes and Senator to Joan Hartley have all signed on to that testimony. For the past two decades, there has been a year over year rise and out of state plates swap laws in Waterbury and throughout the state. It is an issue that I have been battling in Waterbury since 2015, when I was elected to the

board of Waterbury. I have testified at the state in 2017 and 2019. And although minor changes have been made to Connecticut general statute, 14-1282, not enough has been done to help the cities and towns combat the problem.

It is well noted that those who choose to live in Connecticut, they have to register their vehicle in another state, cheat the city and towns they live in auto motor vehicle tax revenue. These false laws also cheat the state of Connecticut out of registration fees, but those cheated most are the taxpayers of our cities and towns that choose to do the right thing year after year. I know for a fact that over the past two decades, the Waterbury taxpayer has been cheated out of millions of much needed revenue.

Aside from the revenue loss for cities and towns, there is also a public safety concern. The Waterbury Police Department Traffic unit is finding that these operating a motor vehicle with out-of-state plates and out of state temporary plates are more likely to not have proper insurance coverage. Connecticut DMV provides real time insurance data. And when a registration is canceled due to lack of insurance, the license plate reader on the police cruiser is able to scan that Connecticut registration and the uninsured operator can be removed from the road. There was no system in place for out of state plates, leaving a danger to our residents on the road with no help available from the DMV, cities and towns are faced with battling the problem alone further containing the effort is a 60 day grace period. That is twice as long as most of our neighboring states and an initial fine of a thousand dollars that seems expensive, not upheld by the courts.

Over the past 10 years, \$912 \$1,000 of fines have been issued. The courts have dismissed 865 of them. House Bill 6569 addresses the above concerns. And we'll give the cities and towns more help in the

fight against scofflaws by one who were in the grace period from 60 days to 30 days, we'll put us in the same periods as Maine, New York, Rhode Island. It should be noted that Massachusetts does not have a grace period to a three step approach, a fine approach that low, but punish is the repeat offender. The fine schedule would follow \$50 for 30 to 60 day, fine, \$250 for a 60 to 90 day fine, \$1,000 over the 90 days. And the vehicle may be taken by the police officer. All fines and money should go to the cities and towns that prosecute it.

The smaller fines at \$50 and two \$50 would likely be more enforced by the courts, a thousand dollar fine. You were now at your third violation and a thousand dollar fine. Now seems more adequate or thank you all for taking the time to listen to my testimony. I truly believe this Bill will help the cities and towns in our state. And I will take any questions that you may have.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you so much, I appreciate your testimony and I agree wholeheartedly. This is a problem across the state. I'm sure that the good city of Waterbury is struggling, but I, in the 26th districts, we see this all too often as well. So I thank you for your time. And I see that Representative O'Dea has his hand raised.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you Representative for your testimony. I remember you coming up and testifying numerous times on this and I, while I'm opposed to the tax, as it stands, it's an issue of fairness to me. I'm going to sign onto your Bill and support it because you know, you're, as you stated, you know, numerous times it's unfair that people don't register their vehicles and get away with not paying and then the rest of us are paying and it simply we-- right. It increases our taxes.

Those that are the scofflaws so to speak. So I thank you very much. I will sign on to your legislation because I think it's a matter of fairness and we have to do something, our cities you know, everybody that the taxes in our cities are too high and we need to figure out ways to get more people to contribute. And if more people are paying us tax, then people's taxes will go down. And so, I thank you for your testimony. I thank you for putting up this Bill and I will sign on to it. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. MICHAEL DIGIOVANCARLO: Thank you, Rep. O'Dea. I do remember You're running out into the hallway to speak with me, so I do remember that. Thank you very much.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Representative. I don't see any further. Oh, I'm so sorry. Representatives Zawistowski. Representative, I'm sorry, you're muted.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): You think I'd know by now. So thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you Representative to come in and speak on this Bill. I just wanted to mention that this is another one of those crossovers between transportation and Planning and Development. There is actually a Planning and Development Bill on this exact topic that had a hearing I believe last week they use may want to check into but it covers the same material.

And I believe we have some people from the assessor's organization coming in today, they were supporting that Bill as well. Maybe we can just one way or the other, maybe we can take a look and at least get one of these through. So you may want to check into that. I don't have a Bill number for you. I'll tell you what I will email you the Bill number when it's done.

REP. MICHAEL DIGIOVANCARLO: I would appreciate that.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Thank you. It's an important topic. It's a fairness issue. I mean, that's really what it is. So again, thank you. And thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Representative. I see that Senator Cassano has his hand raised.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I assume you can hear me this time. Just to comment I'm listening to the various penalties and so on history shows those penalties are not working, and I'm not one of those that believes in drastic penalties, but if you've been asked twice, I've told twice that you got to pay and register your car and you don't, why aren't we just taking a consuming the vehicle until it's paid until its registration is paid for and so on, because if I'm not going to pay it once I'm not going to pay it the second time and I couldn't pay it the third time, I'm just going to drive and let everybody else pay for me.

REP. MICHAEL DIGIOVANCARLO: And Senator I will respond. So I did hear that about publicly promoting it, we started a blue sticker campaign in Waterbury, a few years back that we'd actually sticker the vehicle to tell them, and we'd have the Connecticut statute right on that vehicle. And they would still ignore us and stuff. I do believe the \$1,000 fine was extreme. I have no problem with a \$50 fine, a \$250 fine. And after a third strike, maybe the vehicle is taken our Waterbury residence.

You know we're trying not to take the vehicle. We're looking for a compliance, number one. We're not trying to fine anybody. I think right out of the gate, think right out of the gate take in the vehicle. It is a rough thing to do, but I believe after 90 days after three strikes and we were to take your vehicle. I believe that would be a proper way. I would like to say also that the fines 900 and I forgive me 915 fines were given and 865 fines were

dismissed that tells, that tells the operator of that vehicle to actually just keep doing what you're doing, because there's no penalty to pay. So that is another problem that hopefully will address. And we've been in contact with, I've been in contact with a few divisions and we're going to make the problem aware. I do believe we could do a public campaign. I know Waterbury, if this was the past, we will definitely get out in front of the issue and warn all our residents.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Thank you. I think it was great to go 90 days, but if you go 90 days and you still don't have a response and finished everybody that pays their fair share I would take the vehicle. Thank you.

REP. MICHAEL DIGIOVANCANCARLO: Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Senator Cassano. Next Representative Reyes. Good to see you, sir. Oh, I believe you're on mute.

REP. REYES (75TH): Thank you, Senator Haskell. Can you hear me now?

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): We can.

REP. REYES (75TH): The famous mountain. Okay. So here we go. So thank you very much. I'd like to thank all my colleagues on transportation and I like to first of all compliment my colleagues from Waterbury Representative DiGiovancarlo, who's pretty much been talking about this for a long, long time. And we've had several pieces of legislation that we put in the dressing, the out of state plate issue, but I am going to just say something real quick before I ask the question. Senator earlier mentioned that this was a big problem in Waterbury and that that this is a problem for Waterbury, all cities like Waterbury.

I got to tell you something, this is a statewide problem, and it's a New England problem. And this is not isolated to any one city or in particular municipalities get the front of it. But this applies to everybody in the state of Connecticut. And there's not a state plate abuse in every corner of this state. And I will go as far as saying, it's a problem in New England, but because of the fact that the proximity of all the coasts, all the states, and we here in the Waterbury delegation, there's basically-- have basically taken a stance that, you know, what, enough is enough and it's time for us to hold everybody accountable.

We're always talking about accountability. We're talking about equity; we're talking about fairness. Well, here's one, that's a seize to get away from us every year. And I believe that I will compliment off Representative DiGiovancarlo for programming the horns on this one and continue to fight this good battle. And my question for the good Representative is simply what do we do with the cars that are in commuter lots without a state plates? It's a question that will come up often, through you, sir.

REP. DIGIOVANCARLO (74TH): Well, situations like you know, cars and commuter lots, colleges snowboards, those are ones you won't-- I don't believe you will be addressing at that cars in that commuter lot. And that car is there daily. Now we can absolutely make sure that that is not a Connecticut resident or Waterbury resident in that commuter lot daily parking there to take another right. That's easy to observe, but, you know, we're looking for those that are blatantly abusing the system have multiple kids in our school system using our roads, using all our services, yet they just won't pitch in their little part about the car tax.

So that can be addressed. We can obviously-- we can obviously find where that car is going. You know, we have a great traffic unit in Waterbury that would definitely address that problem. Again, we're

looking for compliance. We're not looking to punish, but as Senator Cassano has said it, the abuse when you're really abusing it, you have to pay the price at some point.

REP. REYES (75TH): Well, again, thank you for your leadership on this particular issue. It's an important issue for the state of Connecticut, and I will be supporting this piece of legislation. Thank you, Representative DiGiovancarlo. And thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. DIGIOVANCARLO (74TH): Thank you, Representative. And also that it shouldn't go on. Notice that you were on the forefront of this also, you brought it to the state for me, so I appreciate it. Thank you, Rep.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Representative Reyes. Next, we will go to Representative Goupil. I'm so sorry if I mispronounced your name Representative.

REP. GOUPIL (35TH): That's all right, it's Goupil.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Goupil, thank you.

REP. GOUPIL (35TH): A lot of people miss it so, nice to see you there in the position.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you.

REP. GOUPIL (35TH): I just want to bring attention that on Friday Planning and Development did here a Bill 6545, very similar to this Bill and we had some testimony so this deeply go to the Planning and Development page testimony for that. Specifically there was testimony from the CCMA, CAOAC on the unregistered vehicles and a couple of the assessors around the state to testify as well. So I think you know, as somebody else had mentioned earlier that there was a similar Bill, just want to bring it to everybody's attention.

REP. DIGIOVANCARLO (74TH): Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Representative. And lastly, Representative O'Dea for the second time.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I apologize Representative, I forgot to ask the question. So I live on a border district. You know, New Canaan is on the border of New York and some of my constituents do have property in upstate New York and have cars in both Connecticut and New York. How would they be impacted by this? I assume if you get a ticket and you don't, when you show that you've got a residency elsewhere in New York, for example, you wouldn't pay ticket, you could fight, or how do I, how would that work practically speaking?

REP. DIGIOVANCARLO (74TH): So the state statute basically says it's where that in the ethics, and you have, if you ask any assessor, they will tell you it's where that car is housed. That car is housed, you know, nine months out of the year in Connecticut, that's considered a Connecticut vehicle they'll say six months, but it's really, I believe it's really a 60 day period that you're consistently there, you are a resident.

Again, I mean maybe each time we'll enforce it differently. I know in Waterbury; we're going to definitely enforce it very hard if the Bill was to pass. But again, I know of people that have New York plates, they have New York post-op boxes, so their checks go to a New York post PO box to avoid other issues with Connecticut taxes.

So again, the border towns you're going to find is obviously very tough, very tough to enforce. They may fight it, but I think that you'll set a precedent. Once you start, once word gets around, once you do a public relations, you know in the

beginning, I believe that truly believe you're going to see a lot of people switch over very quick.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Thank you. And I see parents dropping off kids at school with the New York plates, and I have to admit it, it drives me crazy cause it's unfair. But at the end of the day, I'm going to have to answer to some constituents who have property elsewhere. And just tell them, look, if your car is, you know, in Florida or New York, six months in a day or more than that's one thing, but if your kid's driving it to and from school every day, that's just not right. So thank you very much Representative for pushing this forward. And thank you very much, Mr. Chair for allowing me a second time.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): No problem at all, Representative.

REP. DIGIOVANCARLO (74TH): Mr. Chair, can I just answer to that too?

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Of course.

REP. DIGIOVANCARLO (74TH): I also want to point out that this is not just a New York problem. This is a Massachusetts and New Jersey. We have more Texas plates in the city of Waterbury than you can imagine, we're having dealers set up. They're going down to Texas to get a dealership they're coming back using that dealership to have plates mailed to Connecticut, temporary registrations from Texas, regular registrations through Texas repair shop place from Texas. We are battling not just, I don't want to think it's just a New York thing, Maine, Maine, who was uses a third party issuer of registrations. That's how these tractor trailers get around much of the state taxes. They are a third party. They use a third party vendor to issue their registration.

So I do want to say it's-- and trust me, I hear you pain Representative because it may not be proper with me. I may lose some votes over this. I don't care. It's a right or wrong thing. So to me, it's a right or wrong thing. And it's about fairness it's instead at 80 year old couple that's it and Waterbury would have 60.2, one mill rate and have been paying their taxes their whole life. I think they deserve some fairness.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Representative for those comments. I would agree. Next, is Representatives Zawistowski.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Thank Mr. Chairman for the second time. I want to thank Representative Goupil for mentioning the Bill number on Planning and Development. And I just wanted to bring up one more thing that came up in testimony there is that we need to be careful if this Bill proceeds to make sure that we have a carve out for farm vehicles that do not leave the premises of the farms. That's just one of the important things.

I'm not sure which Bill is going to move forward if either of them by wanting to make sure that that is a major consideration because a lot of farms do use old vehicles that would never pass inspection just on their own premises to move things around. So again, Representative, I will not be sending you the email with the number now of you have it now. So we'll watch both of these as they go forward. And thank you, Mr. Chairman for the indulgence for the second time.

REP. MICHAEL DIGIOVANCARLO: Thank you. And I'm, well, I'm open obviously to your Committee, I'm open for any suggestions or changes you want to make that hopefully don't impact the Bill too much, but protect those that deserve to be protected.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Representative. And thank you Representative Zawistowski. I don't

see any further questions for you, sir. So we appreciate your time and your testimony this afternoon, this morning.

REP. MICHAEL DIGIOVANCARLO: Thank you, everybody have a great day. Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): I should have mentioned this quite some time ago, and I apologize. We are now past the first hour of the public hearing, meaning we will be alternating between members of the public and elected officials. That also means that our wonderful clerk, Phil is going to be eye timing folks on a three-minute basis, just so we can move quickly through the public hearing testimony. We're going to hear next from-- let me just take a look, Joe Polletta.

REP. JOE POLLETTA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, can you hear me okay?

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Yes. Good afternoon Representative.

REP. JOE POLLETTA: Thank you. Good afternoon. Senator Haskell and Representative Lemar, Senator Somers and Representative Carney. Thank you for the brief opportunity and indulgence for a few moments as I speak in support of HB 6569, an act concerning motor vehicle registration. About two years ago, I had a constituent call me and ask what she could do about a car parked in our neighborhood with plates registered in another state. The car had been there for about eight months in the new homeowners failed to register their vehicle with the state of Connecticut. At that time, I did not have an answer.

As time passed, I read articles in our local paper, which is the Republican American about a Waterbury alderman that was trying to rectify the problem without of state plates. Then I'll bring my DiGiovancarlo, had a passion for fixing the system that was clearly broken in our area. A conversation

and shoot, and fast forward about two years. And here we are.

I support this Bill and I encourage this Committee to pass this Bill without changes and send it to the general assembly. First, it creates a sense of honesty and accountability. With passage, this Bill will ensure that new residents of Connecticut and there are many register their vehicles in a timely manner. Second, it provides much needed revenue to towns and cities across Connecticut. We can all agree that funding transportation is one of our top priorities. We may have different views on how to get there, but passing this Bill will at least offer, sorry, some sort of payments by those people using our roads, bridges and tunnels.

Third, the amount of funds the state and municipality may receive could be significant, registration fees, motor vehicle taxes, and more would provide a stream of revenue that could be used in a positive way to improve our community roadways. These are tough economic times that we live in any assistance to our towns and cities is welcome news.

Let's send a clear message to our taxpayers and Connecticut drivers that we are going to level the playing field. Let's send a message to the new residents of Connecticut, that while we welcome you to our beautiful state, we want you to register your vehicle in a timely manner, and let's send a message to struggling municipalities. That assistance may be on the way. Let's send a message to Connecticut businesses that those using our roadways are paying for them the same way that you are. Let's pass HB 6569, and send it to governor Lamont for signage. Thank you for your time.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Representative Polletta for your time and for your testimony and also for your patients this morning. I see Representative O'Dea has his hand raised.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just real quick question for Representative. Thank you for your testimony. One of the things I brought up in past years was for any business or residence multi housing project type residency, where you have to have a placard or a sticker for parking, you know, having the business not allowed to give parking stickers, to were apartment complexes, stickers to out-of-state registered vehicles and fine them for if that comes out to happen. Is that something that I know I'm just hitting this to you, has that been a thought? I had thought about adding that to the last time when this came up before us, but any thoughts on that?

REP. JOE POLLETTA: Absolutely, Representative O'Dea. And, you know, I did say my testimony without changes, and I guess I meant negative changes. I think that that would be a positive change if you are here, particularly in the city of Waterbury, I represent Watertown, which borders Waterbury, but if you are here in your, in a larger housing complex for more than X amount of months, whatever this Bill may say, then yes, you should have a placard and you should be responsible for your vehicle because you're using the roads you're using the bridges. You're traveling around town and everyone knows when they've hit a pothole. Or like you said, when you're dropping your kids off at school, you think who's going to pay, like who's going to pay for that pothole that needs to be fixed. We all pay for it collectively.

So, if they share in this with us, then I think it's fair levels the playing field. So yes, if you're living here, you've been in an apartment complex, you're using our roads. You have a car, then yes, you should pay the Connecticut fees and so on and so forth to the state, into your local municipality.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Thank you very much Representative. Appreciate your testimony. Thank you Mr. Chair.

REP. JOE POLLETTA: Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Representative O'Dea and thank you, Representative Polletta. I don't see any other hands raised, so we thank you for your time and for your testimony this morning. Next we will hear from Ms. Christi Carrano, who I believe will be joined by state Representative Craig Fishbein.

REP. CRAIG FISHBEIN: Yes. Good morning, Mr. Chairman. I didn't know if you wanted me to start and hand it off to Ms. Carrano. That's the way we had set it up.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): That works well for me.

REP. CRAIG FISHBEIN: Okay. Thank you. Good morning, chairman Haskell, chair Lemar, vice chairs, Cassano and Sims Ranking members, Carney and Somers and distinguished members of the Transportation Committee. We have submitted written testimony. I don't see it on the system yet, but that is submitted on behalf of myself and Senator Cicarella. And we are writing to you and we are, I am appearing before you today in support of Senate Bill 608, which is titled an act concerning the safety of children when buying ice cream from frozen dessert truck. And I must stress that, I think we all recognize that not just children buy ice cream from dessert trucks we do as well.

And this Bill has to do with safety and, you know, something that was brought to my attention that there's been quite a few incidents involving particularly children being injured after doing a transaction at an ice cream truck or dessert truck one such incident happened in my district. And I know you're going to hear from Christine in a bit. You know, unfortunately she lost her son. Christi's been a friend and a colleague for many years. She's going to tell you, you know, what happened in that

situation, but her situation doesn't just sit there alone. Our written testimony references an incident in Hamden, and you'll notice that if you do a search on OLR over the summer, I did ask them to put a report together with regard to, you know, these things happening across the country.

The language is before you, I do have some concerns about though you know, it asks for ice cream trucks to register, and it goes into effect October 1st, 2021. I would have a grace period of let's say a year for those that are currently in that business, but to adopt the Hartford ordinance, or Hartford has an ordinance that says, if you don't have certain safety encroachments that you can't vend in a way that would cause a child to across the street to get to the truck, unless they are their law says as accompanied by an adult, I would urge you to have something that says escorted by an adult, cause a company could be far away. We want to make sure that this transportation across our roadway is happening safely.

Also one may say, well, Representative Fishbein, you know, you're the smaller government guy, why are you here? And this, you know, more laws and that kind of stuff, you know, utilizing our roadways is a license. We are given permission to transfer ourselves from one place to another and when a business uses our roadways, they have a duty to do so in a safe manner. And what this law calls for is certain safety requirements, similar to those that are on buses, flashing lights, bars, that kind of stuff.

And obviously because buses attract children similarly here as constructs too as well. So with that oh, there's one other portion of the Bill that I questioned and that's in lines 116 to 117. It says the operator of a frozen dessert truck shall not permit any unauthorized person to ride in or on the truck. And I don't know who or why that language is

there, but quite frankly, the language doesn't deal with who is an authorized person.

So I would have to assume that if one owns a truck, anybody that is not there by permission is unauthorized under the simple language of how we operate. So I don't know why that language is there other than to, I can't go into why somebody would put that language in there. But with that, Mr. Chairman, I would like to turn it over to my friend constituent colleague, Christi Carrano, and I believe her husband's here also Tyler Barhorst, he's on the list next. Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Representative for your testimony. Christi are you with us today?

CHRISTI CARRANO: Yes, Senator, I am. Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Good to see you. Go right ahead.

CHRISTI CARRANO: Great to see you as well. Representative Fishbein, I'd first like to speak to your question about the writing on the truck and I've researched the case law quite a bit on this issue. And I think that that language may be present because especially in the early sixties and seventies children would jump on the back of the truck and try to ride the ice cream truck and that created a whole new set of safety issues. So that may be in part why that's added and an additional issue was the sex offender registry and making sure that everyone that was licensed to operate an ice cream truck was registered on the or that was not on the sex offender registry. So just speaking to those two points if I go over, please stop me. I'm so sorry.

I did submit written testimony. I don't see it uploaded yet. But I did submit it. As some of you may know, I reached out a lot. We lost our Son Tristin in on June 12th and I'm so sorry. This past

year it was his dad's birthday and her friends graciously decided to host a birthday celebration in the backyard for his dad. It was also the kid's last day of school. And despite all of the cakes and desserts and brownies and everything that we had there, when the kids heard the jingle of the ice cream truck, they went wild as all kids do. And no dessert that was on the table was comparable to getting that ice cream from the ice cream truck, especially my son who is a lover of all food, lots of pictures of food hanging out of his mouth, but ice cream, for sure, to be the most important.

So as the kids went into a frenzy to get money and flagged down the ice cream truck, all of the dads went to the front of the house to watch the kids. There were nine. Most of them older 12, 13 my son was two months shy of being 11 years old. Most of the children being older, they crossed in a group as the dads rounded the front of the house. And my son was the first one to get his ice cream from the truck, SpongeBob square pants ice cream pop, which was the same every single time.

And as he rounded the truck, a teenage driver, an inexperienced teenage driver was traveling at approximately 40 miles an hour approaching the rear of the vehicle of the truck. My husband's screamed out to our son as well as our friend, Tristin, Tristin stop. But as he hit the double yellow lines and the car simultaneously came around the truck, it violently struck our son. And by the time I ran to the front of the house, he was gone and I just held him as his life and life as I knew it, came to an abrupt end that day.

The legislation before you is common sense, since the seventies, these recommendations have been made by the national highway association and New Jersey has adopted all of the laws. And oh my God, I can't, I'm so sorry. Can't think or speak in connection with those recommendations since the 1970s, 50 years New Jersey has had this law and these

recommendations have been in place. It's common sense to alert drivers that children are going to be in the area and to have a stop arm that extends from the vehicle and many vehicles, including the one that sold ice cream to my son had the stop arm in place already, but the driver chose not to use it because it was light out. And he had indicated that because it was laid out, he didn't think that it was important. And the driver that passed the vehicle at 40 miles an hour and hit my son was a teenager who was inexperienced and just didn't recognize that children would be passing by the vehicle.

It's common sense to have this equipment on these vehicles. And I agree with Representative Fishbein who has been very supportive in all of this, that there should be some sort of grace period. Of course, there should, the trucks have to get equipped with this equipment. And I think a year is very, a reasonable amount of time to allow them to do so. And it's my understanding, especially the recommendations that have come out from the national highway safety administration have said that the cost is low with equipping these vehicles with this. I've done some research on my own that has shown in contacting the school buses and some of their, I'm so sorry, some of their providers that it's about between \$500 and \$700 to equip the vehicles with all of the safety equipment that we are advocating for.

So the cost is low. The protection is great and a year's time in order to implement this law, I think is very reasonable. And hopefully as Representative Fishbein had said, we can also include the language from the Hartford ordinance, that's been in existence again, since the 1970s that provides that ice cream truck vendors cannot bend ice cream to children that they know must cross the street. In our case, again, there were nine children, nine children that had to cross the street in order to purchase an ice cream from this truck and zero children on the side of the street that the ice cream truck parked. I'm ashamed that as a mom

sitting in the backyard and never occurred to me that my child would be crossing the street, even though he wasn't an impulsive little boy, he was a very well-mannered, well-disciplined responsible almost 11 year old child, regardless, it never even occurred to me that the ice cream truck would be on the opposite side of the street.

I know I'm all over the place. I'm sorry. This is very difficult. I just asked that you please help us to pass this common sense legislation in a bipartisan fashion. This is not a political issue. I appreciate any and all support in getting something meaningful passed. Thank you.

REP. CRAIG FISHBEIN: Mr. Chairman. I just want to point out that the Bill was introduced by both Republicans and Democrats in both the House and Senate. So we do have bipartisan strong support on this Bill and Mr. Chairman, I also point out too that I believe next in your list is Christi's husband, Tyler Barhorst. I didn't know if he wanted to add anything. Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you so much Representative Fishbein. And thank you, Ms. Christi Carrano. How do you, how do I pronounce your last name?

CHRISTI CARRANO: Carrano, you have it and I'm also happy. I'm not going to be super emotional. I'm sorry. I'm also happy to address -

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): You have no need to apologize before the Committee. We are so grateful that you are here sharing your story, and I am so grateful that you've channeled your grief into advocacy. So please, there's no need to apologize.

CHRISTI CARRANO: And I'm happy to address any questions.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you. I did want to give an opportunity at the good Representatives request for your husband to say a few words, if he's on the line as well, would he like to jump in before we move to questions?

TYLER BARHORST: Yes. Thank you. And again, for those of you who I've never met, I'm Tyler Barhorst, I'm Tristin's father, and I want to thank you all for taking the time to discuss this important Bill. You cannot imagine how important this issue is to all of Tristin's family and his friends. I could spend years explaining to you all what a gift my son was to this world. He was bright. He was kind, he was brave.

But since we have such limited time here I'll simply say that he was a perfect soul and he always stood for what he believed was right. And that I wish I had the strength to be half the person that he was every day since June 12th everyone who knew Tristin has basically passed their days thinking of a thousand little things that would have prevented this tragedy have they been even just a little bit different.

Every day we ask ourselves, what is the ice cream truck was facing the other way? What if the stop sign had been out in flashing? What if that Jeep had been going just a few miles an hour slower? And I asked myself, what if I had yelled out his name just one second earlier, grieving family and friends. These are the questions that we struggled to answer every day. And as legislators, you have questions that you face that are a bit different. And the most important question that you have to answer is what can we do about this to make sure that it never happens again?

Fortunately I think that that answer is largely been provided to you today in the form of this Bill. And I'm sure that upon hearing or this Bill, some of you may have developed concerns about reactions of your

constituents that may be involved in the frozen dessert truck business. But when you think about those concerns, I think we all need to be mindful of the fact that as of right now, the operators of these trucks have little or no guidance as to what they should be doing to keep the children that they are marketing to safe during these transactions.

The absence of this, a Bill like this, doesn't just needlessly endanger kids. It also leaves the frozen dessert truck business without the tools that it needs to make itself safer. So whether your focus and reviewing this Bill is on children, whether it's on the frozen dessert truck business, or whether it's on the millions of drivers who may encounter kids coming to, or coming back from one of these trucks on the road, we all need to be mindful of what's really at stake here. And what's really at stake here is that you have an opportunity to make sure that no other parent has to, and each night sitting on an empty bed saying goodnight to a child that no hunger says good night back.

You have an opportunity to make sure that no other parent has to replay the image of losing their child. Every time they see an ice cream truck or the front end of a Jeep parked in that road, you have an opportunity to make sure that no sister will ever have to feel alone in a quiet house that was once filled with brother's laughter and you have an opportunity to make sure that no other driver on the road ever has to carry the pain of having struck a child coming from one of these trucks. And you have the opportunity to make sure that no more perfect little souls like Tristin are taken from his heart too soon.

I'm thankful for the progress that this has made going from a concept to the Bill that's in front of you. And now I ask you to seize on this opportunity that you have to move this language forward along with any additional protections that you deemed fit

to add such as the Hartford ordinance, that my wife and Craig Fishbein spoke about moments ago.

And I asked you seize this opportunity, not only to move this Bill forward today, but that you push it forward. Once it comes time to vote this into law on the floor. As I said, my son always stood for what he thought was right. And he did so every day that he spent on this earth and he would think this is the right thing to do. So please honor him by seizing this opportunity. And please recognize this Bill as Tristin's law so that he can be remembered through these positive changes that you have the power to make. Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you so much, Christi and Tyler for your incredibly powerful testimony. And thank you Representative Fishbein for your advocacy on this Bill. It's the very best days in the general assembly are days that we can come together. And I won't even say bipartisan, I would use the word nonpartisan manner to hopefully help prevent tragedies like this. And of course to honor Tristin's memory.

So we are so grateful for all that you've done to bring this Bill before us. And I look forward to working with my colleagues on this legislation. I see many of them have questions or comments for you today. So we'll start with Representative Cristin McCarthy Vahey.

REP. MCCARTHY (133RD): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and Mr. Chair, I echo your comments, Christi and Tyler, Representative Fishbein. I want to thank you for being here and for sharing your powerful witness and you're opening up and sharing and helping us to understand your grief so that we can help make changes to protect other children. There is no way for any of us to know the kind of heartache that you're feeling. And I know you kept apologizing Christi during your remarks, but your passion and

your love for your son Tristin is a very powerful message to all of us.

Tyler, and you talked about what you live through every day and that's got to be, I can't even imagine it's got to be so hard if we were all in person today. I know I can speak for every one of my colleagues. When I say that, I think we would all want to be able to speak to you in person. We would step out into the hallway with you and offer some words of encouragement and support and gratitude. So that's what I'm hoping to do today is to offer you our strength and support. And as the good chair said, and committed to working together with others on this Committee, to be sure that we can pass this law, but more than anything else. Thank you for your courage and for being here today.

CHRISTI CARRANO: Thank you.

TYLER BARHOST: Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you so much, Representative McCarthy Vahey. Next, Senator Cassano followed by Representative Carney.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Thank you Mr. Chairman. These are the days. These are tough days. Christi, Tyler, first of all, I'm very, very sorry for your loss. This is something that we can do if we're smart, we will do quickly naming the Bill makes tremendous sense, but it's becoming in another month, those trucks are going to be back out on the road and this shouldn't be the normal process where we pass a Bill and it takes months to get through it. We should try to get this thing expediated at the next meeting of the house and the Senate, I know they meet for judges. They meet for this; they meet for that. Let's get this thing processed and moving through, so it can be effective immediately. So that this year again, we don't go through another loss of another child. There's a message here. Let's get

this Bill out. Let's get it done. Let's get it through the whole process and we'll save lives.

CHRISTI CASSANO: Thank you.

TYLER BARHOST: Thank you.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you so much, Senator Cassano. I agree. We got to get this done as quickly as possible. Representative Carney followed by Representative Thomas.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you so much to Christi and Tyler for your testimony and your strength through this tragedy. I'm so sorry to the two of you and your daughter off for loss of trust. And he sounds like he was an amazing young man and the least we can do as a legislature is to get this Bill passed. I do want to thank Representative Fishbein. He brought this Bill to my attention, I think last month, whenever it was proposed and he's been on top of it.

And I just, and I love seeing that it was bipartisan. That's great because this is not an issue that should be partisan at all. So, when I tell you, you've got my support and I will be working very hard. I agree with Senator Cassano. We should be getting this out as quickly as we can and getting it through the legislature so we can make Tristin's law a reality. So again, thank you so much for your strength, your courage, and I'm so sorry for your loss.

CHRISTI CARRANO: Thank you so much.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Representative Carney. Representative Thomas.

REP. THOMAS (143RD): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Christi and Tyler, let me just echo, I think to turn tragedy

into advocacy is both laudable and extremely brave. So I thank you for taking that step. Not everyone [inaudible] will do that, but to help other parents avoid this, my heart goes out to you and I thank you, but you don't need my heart. You actually need legislation passed.

So, I echo Representative Fishbein his concern about line 116, and I do think it would help the Bill to define that further. But I had a real area of concern on line I think it starts line 47 of the Bill because I think we need, I think about the Department of Motor Vehicles and how long it takes to educate people to stop at a school bus. And I just thought everyone learned that in driver's education as a teenager, but I'm surprised how many cars I see attempt to pass a school bus.

So I am afraid that by changing the language of the sign, I believe it says, if safe stop, then go, is asking the average motorist who was not as conscientious as I would hope we would all be to not act at all. So I'm just wondering, and perhaps Rep. Fishbein, you have a thought, is there any reason we can't do something that motorists are more used to seeing, like stop, proceed with caution or if you considered any other language because I', fearful that that language will create more confusion than compliance.

REP. CRAIG FISHBEIN: I totally thank you for that question to very poignant point. You know, that whole, we use stop signs and red for stop, and then we use caution, we use yellow. So how can you to a motorist give both messages? You're giving a mixed message when ultimately you want absolute direction. I guess the concern is that if you tell one to stop, you know, there could be a lot of vending going on. So stop for how long know, usually with a bus, you know, you see a line of children, you know, okay, the kids are getting out of the bus and it's going to end soon. So I think that's the balance.

Ultimately, you know, the legislation does call for a rate of speed that the individual would pass. So, you know, perhaps caution if pass no more than five miles per hour, you know, something like that. And that way you're giving the direction. And I, you know, but I look forward to working together with the chairs of the Committee and, you know, certainly Rep. Thomas, with regard to you know, bringing that to fruition, you know, it was a really good point. So thank you.

REP. THOMAS (143RD): Thank you for that. I would hate to see noncompliance for something that I do believe is such common sense as long overdue and Christi and Tyler, thank you once again for sharing your advocacy around this and bringing it to our attention.

CHRISTI CARRANO: No, thank you. And if I may, may I speak to that question?

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Absolutely, go right ahead.

CHRISTI CARRANO: I thank you so very much for that question because actually when the language came out I was a little confused by it, myself. I kind of grappled with the everyday person versus lawyer in me and looking at that now the stop language is in much bigger letters, then it's safe, then go. So I was saying it would an ordinary person think if safe, stop, then go or stop if safe then go.

And I agree that could be very confusion, very confusing, I would love to see something that said, stop if safe, then go or stop, proceed with caution. I think that that would make much more sense to the everyday. It makes much more sense to me in every hat that I'm wearing. And it's not. And I just want to pony back, or piggyback on what pointing back, piggyback on what Representative Fishbein said about the stopping for a prolonged period.

This legislation proposes to stop if safe then go. It's not an extended period of time. It's not for the duration of the vending. It is to ensure that vehicles are not passing at 40 miles per hour, which is the speed, my son was struck out on a 25 mile an hour rode, as opposed to going by five miles per hour, which is what the legislation proposes so that there is a greater ability to react to what you perceive in front of you. But anyway, thank you for that question. And I agree, and I would like to see the language or at least the way the language is shown on the sign modified. Thank you.

REP. THOMAS (143RD): Thank you, Christi. I read it the exact same way, and I also try to put myself into someone who's not paying attention and they're just going, and I think that slight reordering would actually make a big difference. So thank you.

CHRISTI CARRANO: Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thanks so much, Representative Thomas. And thank you, Christi and Representative Fishbein for that answer. I really liked the language stopped and proceed with caution. I think that that is probably clear than what we have right now. I don't see any further questions or comments from the Committee members, but I look forward to keeping in touch on this very important issue. And again, I cannot thank you enough for your strength, your courage, and coming forward to testify. We are so grateful to know Tristin's story and to hear your voices on this important matter.

CHRISTI CARRANO: Thank you all so much.

TYLER BARHOST: Thank you.

REP. CRAIG FISHBEIN: Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Okay, next, we're going to hear from my colleague Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good morning everyone. I am Senator Paul Formica and you know, I'm just so taken back by the previous testimony, that I just want to say that we deal with a lot of things in this general assembly and nothing more important than what we've just heard. So please, run my support to Tristin's law, house Bill 608, and extend my heartbreaking feelings to Representative Fishbein and to the family for that. And I commend the good chair for his compassionate remarks to the speakers.

Chairman Haskell and Lemar and Ranking members, Somers and Carney, I'm going to testify in support of raised Bill 982, an act revising the motor vehicle statutes, specifically speaking to sections 2 and 7. Sections 2 line 82 to 86 would update the statutes to allow for a motor home owner to register the motor home in Connecticut using a post office box as an address. This would be helpful to those who reside in the motor home and would solve a dilemma for many of our constituents who do not maintain a street address, but would still like to continue to maintain residency here in Connecticut. As we all know, our lives are becoming increasingly more immobile.

The change in section 7 lines, beginning of lines, 258 would provide parents of a blind or disabled child, one handicap placard per parent, instead of the current allowance of one placard per child. This change would be particularly helpful for those parents who share custody as a result of separation or divorce. I thank the Committee for its proactive approach to providing these solutions and I ask and urge support. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman for your time and the Committee.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Senator Formica. I appreciate your time and your testimony, and it's good to see you before this Committee today. I don't see any questions or comments from my colleagues,

but thanks for your patience too. I know it's been sort of a long morning.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): Thank you, sir. Appreciate all your time.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Okay. Next we're going to move to Senator Eric Berthel.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND): Good morning Mr. Chair, thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Good morning, Senator.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND): Good to see you, congratulations on your new appointment to the Committee. I'm sure you'll do a fine job there, Senator. So Chairman Lemar, Chairman Haskell, Ranking members Carney and Somers, distinguished members of the Transportation Committee. I am here to-- I'm Senator Eric Berthel. I'm here to speak with you today about your Committee Bill, Senate Bill 982 and specifically section 1.

And actually it's a very small adjustment to the statutes. It's actually lines 15 and 16, and this would change the eligibility date for a new newly licensed driver to have a passenger in their car with them besides-- well, essentially the law right now says they can't have any passengers except for an adult. But this would allow them essentially to have a sibling who would be in the car with them for the purpose of going to and from school.

As a parent right now of a 16 year old who is on a learner's permit and a 14 year old who and both of my boys attend the same school. I can tell you that every day I see a pulling into that school, violations of this rule. And I think that it's a simple enough adjustment. I think that there could be some additional training and some responsibility that is bestowed upon this young driver in having

their sibling in the car. And it eliminates them necessarily doing this legally now.

What I do also see is I will see a 16 year old driver driving in one car and then the mom or dad or guardian driving the other siblings in a car right behind them. So we end up with more cars on the road going into very busy school environments. So I thank you for including this language. This was originally a standalone Bill. I thank you for including this in your Committee Bill, Senate Bill 982. And I would welcome and encourage your support on this measure. Mr. Chairman, thank you. I'm willing to entertain any questions that the members may have at this time.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thanks so much Senator for your testimony. I would agree there is flagrant violation in my neck of the woods as well. Representative Thomas, I see has her hand raised go right ahead.

REP. THOMAS (143RD): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): I'm sorry. Representative, you've been muted.

REP. THOMAS (143RD): I think someone did that on purpose. No, I'm just kidding. Thank you Senator. I agree. This feels like one of those common sense situations that everyone is doing anyway. One thought did occur to me and I just wonder, you know, right now the way the Bill is written, any child could drive a sibling, but do you think it's important to somehow safeguard this so that parental permission would need to be required? I just, playing devil's advocate, I'm always thinking like, what if there's a situation where a parent might not endorse such a thing and the child takes their sibling?

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND): Representative, thank you. That's a really great question. I had not thought

about that. And I think that parental consent for things like this would be, would actually add another layer of security and reassurance to the legislation. And, you know, right now we allow this after six months of the new driver holding their license. So that those that are under the age of 18. So to your point, it does eventually happen. But I agree I think that's some good substitute language that could be put into the Bill that requires parental consent. Absolutely. Thank you.

REP. THOMAS (143RD): Thank you. That's it, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Representative Thomas. Don't go anywhere. Senator Berthel, Representative Berger-Girvalo is next.

REP. BERGER-GIRVALO (111TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Actually, my comment is really to kind of echo what Representative Thomas pointed out and speaking to a few parents. In my own community, they actually side with some of their children, their own children, they would have supported this and with another one of their children, they would not have trusted that same child at 16 to drive their 14 year old siblings. So I do think that parental consent is definitely something we need to consider. So just to kind of reiterate that. Thank you Mr. Chair.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thanks for Representative. Senator, I see no other questions or comments, but I appreciate your patience this morning and looking forward to seeing you in the capital sometime soon.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND): Yes, very good. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for your time.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Alright next, we will move to Jack Dunn. Mr. Dunn, are you with us this morning or this afternoon?

JACK DUNN: Yes, I am. Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Good to see you, go right ahead.

JACK DUNN: Well, good afternoon Chair, Representatives and senators. Thank you for writing me for a chance to speak. My name is Jack Dunn, I am speaking on behalf of Senate Bill 982, specifically section 18, subsection C, which allows for members of volunteer ambulance associations to use flashing blue lights.

I personally have been a volunteer at EMT and firefighter in Middlesex County for a little over four years. In Connecticut, most towns are served by volunteer fire and EMS organizations. And in most cases, those volunteer firefighters or EMTs are responding directly from their homes or work to their respective fire or EMS departments or directly to emergencies.

In order to facilitate this, Connecticut has a courtesy light laws allowing for members of fire departments to use blue lights and members of volunteer ambulance agencies to use green lights. Blue lights are widely recognized as emergency lights throughout our nation, but since many EMS agencies in Connecticut are also a part of the local fire departments, the volunteers or EMTs in those departments are also able to use blue lights.

Green lights are not as common as blue lights in this state. However, in Middlesex County, where most fire and EMS departments are separate organizations, they are more common. Unfortunately green lights are not effective in allowing members of volunteer ambulance associations to get to emergencies. And quite frankly, they cause a lot of confusion on the road. Most people I've come across with absolutely no clue what a flashing green light signifies. I've had people pull up alongside me on numerous occasions while I'm responding to emergencies and actually asked me what they're for. Furthermore I've

even been pulled over by some members of law enforcement who also had no clue what a flashing green light signifies.

On numerous occasions I've been told by dispatchers that people have called 911 reporting me or other people driving with green lights thinking they were doing something illegal because they were not sure what it signifies. If the intent of the courtesy light law in Connecticut is to allow for volunteer ambulance association members to get to emergencies in a faster and safer manner by requesting the right of way, current statute allowing for volunteer EMTs to only use greenlights does not serve that purpose.

Furthermore, with the Department of Transportation putting green lights in all their new trucks, it diminishes the importance of them further and creates further opportunity for confusion on the road. I've talked about this issue with numerous chiefs of public safety organizations, and everyone has been in agreement that allowing members of volunteering EMS agencies to use blue lights will not only allow for those members to get to emergencies faster, thus expediting care, but would also reduce confusion on the road, making it safer for everyone.

Additionally, by allowing both volunteer firefighters and volunteer ambulance agency members to use the same color light, we would relieve a financial burden by no longer requiring those who serve in both agencies to need to purchase two separate lights. Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you so much, Mr. Dunn. I really appreciate your testimony and appreciate your service, of course in that capacity. A very quick question for you. You mentioned expense, is it an expense born by the municipality or born by the individual volunteer too-

JACK DUNN: It's an expensive born by the individual volunteer. So currently the way the law is written is not a problem in most areas of the state because as I expressed before both the EMS agencies and fire departments are normally one agency. However, in some parts of the state, especially in Middlesex County where they're separate agencies it's against the law for someone to use a green light when going to a fire call or to use a blue light when going to an ambulance call despite the fact that a green light is not at all as effective as the blue light is.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Understood. Well, all the more reason I think we ought to, to provide that relief and consistency. One last question before I turn it over to the good Ranking member, did you submit written testimony? I was just looking through to see if that's in our system.

JACK DUNN: I did not, but I would be more than willing to send this over as well as a written testimony.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): If you happen to have time and have something written down, that would be helpful, obviously I appreciate your testimony and the words you said today, but it's, you know, it's always good to make sure that my notes match with the written testimony that folks submit. So I really appreciate your comments today and I'll turn it over now to Representative Carney.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Jack. Jack is my constituent. He actually brought this issue up to me. He's in college right now at Georgetown. He's a great, great young man. Oh, oh yeah. Senator, you went to Georgetown, didn't you?

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Jack, I can't believe you didn't mention that.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): But Jack, I really appreciate you taking the time to come on and testify. I'm just curious, because there was some testimony in opposition from some fire organizations. Would there be opposition instead of going to a blue light to say, going to a red light or a different colored light other than green that may have a better or a more effective impact than green light?

JACK DUNN: Yeah, so I understand some of white people would possibly speak in opposition to it. If both agencies are using the same color light it's, a driver on the road would not be able to separate EMS from fire. However, seeing as though most agencies are both and it really is not a problem in my opinion, because if most areas are using blue for both EMS and fire to institute that on a statewide level would really not implement much of a change throughout the majority of Connecticut.

You talked about having red light instead of a green or instead of blue. Unfortunately red light is not a courtesy light in the state of Connecticut. I think the only courtesy lights are green and blue and a red light would force someone to give you the right of way. It's not requesting the right of way, it's basically asking for the right of way. Whereas green and blue are simply a request for the right of way did not tell you to be able to break any traffic laws. The problem though is with both of those courtesy lights blue and green, green is nowhere as effective as blue.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Right. No, I have to agree with you. And it does look like, you know DOD vehicles are using green lights as well now. So it kind of reduces I guess their effectiveness, but I'm sure we'll be continuing conversations about this going forward. Again, thanks for coming on. And you know, I just want to tell everyone there may be one day Representative Dunn. you wouldn't be sitting in my seat here, but maybe in the legislation, we'll see that happen one day. So thanks a lot, Jack.

JACK DUNN: Thank you. Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thanks so much Representative Carney. I Representative McCarthy Vahey.

REP. MCCARTHY (133RD): Thank you very much Mr. Chair, and I know we have a lot of speakers today, but I just had to say Mr. Dunn Hoya Saxa now I understand a little better why you'd like the blue lights instead. Have a great day.

JACK DUNN: Hoya Saxa.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Jack, thank you so much for your time and for your testimony and I hope we have a chance to meet in person once this pandemic is behind us. Looking forward to working on this Bill with the good Representative Carney.

JACK DUNN: Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Alright, Seeing no further questions or comments from Committee members, we will move now to Rose Carrano. Is Rose with us today?

ROSE CARRANO: Oh, yes, I am.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Hi, how are you?

ROSE CARRANO: Okay. I will be-- Good. So, I'm Rose Carrano. I'm Tristin's aunt. And I'm here to support the Bill number 608. And you heard from Christi and Tyler, and that's the call you never want to get at 10:00 PM that a love one is at the hospital and you have only a half hour to go and say goodbye if you'd like to. And we've been going through a lot since June. And my son is six and he loves ice cream from those ice cream truck, every time he hears the music he runs outside.

And for me last year was really hard to look at him going to the ice cream truck and thinking that Tristin was not there and they could not do that together anymore. And we really want you guys to look into this Bill and make sure that the ice cream trucks are equipped to not only provide joy for this kids, but safety. And also, I would like to add that the impact that an accident in those circumstances can cause it's lifetime-- it's everlasting and not only for Tristin's family and friends, but for that teenager and for the ice cream drivers, ice cream truck driver. So we appreciate your time and thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you so much, Ms. Carrano and I'll echo what I mentioned to Tristin's parents, which is, we're just so grateful for the bravery and the strength of your family. And coming forward to tell Tristin's story. And I think Senator Cassano made an especially important point that there's a real urgency to get this Bill done before the summer months. So we so appreciate your testimony. I see that Representative McCarthy Vahey has her hand raised.

REP. MCCARTHY (133RD): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair and Ms. Carrano, I would echo the sentiments of our chair, your bravery and courage as with that of your, the rest of your family is tremendous. But I also wanted to note something that I don't think we talked about earlier in testimony was the compassion with which you have spoken of the driver of the vehicle has been very overwhelming to me.

And I think that that's just something that really speaks volumes to all of you, that as you face your own grief, you were trying to turn this into something so positive wellbeing so compassionate. Thank you.

ROSE CARRANO: And my son, I think of my son being 17 and out there driving and being in that situation by himself not knowing, not to do and have to carry

that with him to all his life. So, I feel I have a lot of confession for that boy and for his family too. Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you so much, Representative McCarthy Vahey and Ms. Carrano. Like I said, we're so grateful for your testimony and look forward to keeping in touch about this legislation. Have a great rest of your day.

ROSE CARRANO: Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Next, we're going to hear from Kimberly Salib, who I believe is joining us via phone. Is that right, Mr. Clerk?

PHIL MAINIERO: Yes, I believe she is speaking to us now, we are asking to press unmute.

KIMBERLY SALIB: Hi, this is Kimberly Salib.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Go right ahead, Ma'am. Thank you for joining us.

KIMBERLY SALIB: Oh, well, thank you. This isn't my first time to call into testify at one of these Committee meetings. So I want to say good morning, chairman Lemar, chairman Haskell and to the other esteemed members of the Transportation Committee. I am testifying against HB 6570. I'm a strong proponent of local zoning laws, and this Bill will take away the rights of the local government. You know, I just wanted to let you know my testimony against this Bill and I also want to send out my thoughts and prayers to Tristin's family. Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you very much, Ms. Salib for your testimony. I see that Representative O'Dea has his hand raised.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and Ms. Salib, I'm sorry. I've got multiple hearings going on in this new world as it is,

literally. I testified in one and I've got two others, so three going on. So I missed the beginning of your testimony. Can you just tell me where you're from?

KIMBERLY SALIB: I'm calling from Greenwich, Connecticut.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Okay. And what do you-- do you work for the town of Greenwich or are you just a concerned citizen?

KIMBERLY SALIB: I chair the Transportation Committee for the RTM.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Okay. I'm sorry, I missed that. I apologize. And just generally -

KIMBERLY SALIB: I'm still learning more about HB 6570. But I know the area around the Greenwich train station is very you know, it should be governed by the town of Greenwich, not by the state. The zoning laws, you know, the area, there's a lot of private residences and, you know, and businesses. And we just want to keep local control around, you know, around our train station.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): If that Bill 6570 were changed rather than having it as of right, but rather an incentive driven proposal whereby the state would for example, help pay for the increased costs that are associated with affordable housing and potential -

KIMBERLY SALIB: No -

REP. O'DEA (125TH): I'm sorry.

KIMBERLY SALIB: No-- My tax dollars are my tax dollars. Why is the state paying for affordable housing? Everyone's leaving and moving to Texas, in Texas capitalist businessmen create affordable housing because people want to live in Texas. Nobody

wants to pay more money to the state of Connecticut. We pay too much in taxes. Did you not here in Waterbury? All of their cars are being licensed in the state of Texas because the government is much more business savvy there, they leave people alone. Let's stop increasing taxes to pay for things that we don't need, right? Our taxes are too high here. I don't want pay for affordable housing-

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Ms. Salib, I am going to-- I need you to allow the good Representative from New Canaan to finish before you respond to his questions.

KIMBERLY SALIB: Yes. Thank you. And I'm sorry, but I'm passionate about -

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): That's right, go right ahead.

KIMBERLY SALIB: [Crosstalk] in Connecticut

REP. O'DEA (125TH): And Ms. Salib, just to clarify and alleviate some of your concerns. I agree with you that Hartford should not be mandating an as of right legislation that creates that has Hartford deciding what can, and can't be built in Greenwich. I am a hundred percent with you on that. And so Greenwich knows what's best for Greenwich, just like New Canaan knows what's best for New Canaan and Hartford knows what's best for Hartford. So -

KIMBERLY SALIB: Can I add one more thing? I know, and I'm sorry to interrupt. I know I'm not supposed to, but I know what's best for me and my family and giving more of my hard earned tax dollars to Hartford is not good for my family. So I just wanted to add that in if we could please. I mean, I just feel like the taxes are going up and up and up, and we keep finding new ways, new things for the government and Connecticut to spend money on. And it has to end because everyone's moving out of Connecticut, I'd lost so many great friends, so many

great businesses. Has anybody noticed that we have no small business in Connecticut and small business is really cool? It's great to have, you know, it's wonderful to have new businesses pop up, but people don't move to Connecticut to open new businesses. And that's unfortunate because the taxes are just getting out of hand here.

So I just want to say, you know, I think that local zoning laws need to stay local. And I don't want to send any tax dollars to Hartford to pay for affordable housing because if you know, let's, you know, I just-- we just need to keep local zoning laws in the hands of local officials, they know best about their area.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): And Ms. Salib -

KIMBERLY SALIB: Thank you.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): You're very welcoming on that last sentence. I totally agree with you a hundred percent. I also, just to let you know, I've been when I first ran in 2012, that was my main campaigns was to grow small business. That's the only way we get out of the fiscal grand canyon we've been put into over years of mismatch, decades of mismanagement. So you and I are in agreement on that growing small business and an agreement on local control. And I thank you very much for your testimony here today.

KIMBERLY SALIB: Can I testify? Can I just make one more quick comment about affordable housing and that families want homes with yards and pools? That's what they aspire to. They don't aspire to an apartment over a train station, and, you know, that's transient, that's transient housing. It's not affordable housing, everyone's moving to-- like to areas like San Antonio, Texas, where they're given a parcel of land with a nice home, a new home, with a new school in the area, and with you know, they want a pool. Like they aspire to something bigger and

better than an apartment over a train station. So I just wanted to throw that out there as well.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): My only comment to that would be, it depends on your, I mean, that's a choice. I mean, I don't disagree with you, but I will tell you when I was 24, as some of the people, and some of the people on this Zoom call 24, 25, I didn't want a pool or a yard. I liked my condo. So look, we're all in it -

KIMBERLY SALIB: That's fine. Okay. [Crosstalk]

REP. O'DEA (125TH): You and I are in agreement about local control and growing small business. And so I thank you for your testimony and Mr. Chair, my only comment to yourself and my good friend from Fairfield was my dad did play basketball at Georgetown. So go Hoya Saxa. But I'm a fryer at heart go friars, big east tournament on Wednesday. Anyway, thank you, Mr. Chair.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you Representative O'Dea. I just didn't make the cut for the Georgetown basketball team, but otherwise I'm sure I would have a senior father there. Ms. Salib don't go anywhere. We've got a few more questions for you. I would humbly suggest that not everybody necessarily aspires and certainly not everybody can afford a home with a yard and a pool. I think that certainly young people like myself, I don't find that feasible and perhaps those who are retiring and seeking to downsize also, don't find that feasible. I'm going to turn the floor over now to Representative Thomas, who has a question for you.

REP. THOMAS (143RD): Thank you so much, Mr. Chair. And thank you, Ms. Salib. I hadn't planned to ask you a question, but something you said really struck me. I know in my district, which comprises parts of Norwalk, Wilton and Westport when I was out door knocking this summer, especially in the midst of COVID, I came across a lot of small business owners

and they were more sort of chief among proponents about the need for affordable housing, both for themselves, because they were they had a startup and, you know, margins were small in the startup phase and especially with the pandemic, or they had employees who worked for them, that they weren't able, you know, they had to travel too far to get to their job.

So I'm just curious on your take, because you mentioned small businesses. It feels to me like the lack of affordable housing hurts small businesses. And I'm just curious if you have any thoughts about that or if you'd like to expand?

KIMBERLY SALIB: Do you know how expensive it is to build in Connecticut?

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Ms. Salib, generally speaking, and does the practice in the general assembly that members of the Committee may ask questions, but members who are here to testify cannot ask question.

KIMBERLY SALIB: Okay. That's fine. Okay. Well, the cost of construction in Connecticut is very, very high because we have so many laws and there's so much insurance requirements. Again, I'm not polished at an answer. You know, it's unfortunate that we don't have a free market, like why aren't like, there's-- why aren't freely constructing affordable housing in Connecticut. Have we answered that question yet? I mean, okay. Not allowed to answer, ask the question, but developers don't come to Connecticut develop because our taxes are so high, right?

We can't keep increasing laws and regulations and force businesses to do, to create housing. It's going against the free market system. So, okay. These business people need affordable housing. Why are they starting a business in Connecticut if they can't afford the housing here?

REP. THOMAS (143RD): Thank you so much for your comments. I'm not a developer, so I won't try to answer behalf of one, but I am a small business owner and I chose to incorporate in New York city. And that is quite a loss for the state of Connecticut in terms of tax revenues for my business, but also my employees. So that's just another side of the coin. But thank you for your time and thank you, Mr. Chair.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Representative Thomas. Next we'll move to Senator Cassano followed by Representative Smith.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm not looking for debate, but I do want to make a comment if we really want to see small business growth and they're going to be able to hire people. We need affordable housing, so people can be here to fill those jobs. That's how it starts. You might eventually grow your business, that you start from scratch into something really special, and you might be able to get away from affordable housing, but it doesn't start without workers, if you're going to have a business and they need a place to live. That is part of the process that we have been for centuries and significant to keep that in mind.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thanks so much, Senator Cassano. Next we will go to Representative Smith.

REP. SMITH (48TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Ms. Salib, for your testimony. I had one, possibly two questions. The first one I'm a little bit confused and maybe you can clarify is your testimony today being given on behalf of the Greenwich RTM or as part of your role as chair of the Transportation Committee? Or are you testifying their behalf?

KIMBERLY SALIB: No, I am testifying on my own behalf.

REP. SMITH (48TH): Okay. Thank you for that. And then this is partly an observation, but I think there's a question that you might be able to answer for me. Many years ago, my late sister, when she was in college, had a friend who was a roommate who married her childhood sweetheart, a firefighter from the town of Greenwich. And in that role, after a couple of years of marriage, when they were ready to purchase a house, they were really faced with the option and it was their only option, which was to look outside of Greenwich because they could not afford a house on their combined salaries at that time. Now this is nearly 50 years ago. And so I'm curious to know whether you can provide us any information or at least me, I'm just wondering whether that situation with respect to somebody that's a firefighter may have changed in the affordability of Greenwich them?

KIMBERLY SALIB: Yeah. So, Greenwich is a very expensive place to live. We all know that you know, it's, you know, there are beautiful pockets of areas in Greenwich where you can find less expensive home. But I mean, why is it the government's role to create, you know, affordable housing, you know, where, you know, I just-- I don't fully-- okay. If I couldn't afford to live in Greenwich--

REP. SMITH (48TH): Well, I apologize. I think that was probably unanswerable -

KIMBERLY SALIB: No, no. The thing is I just don't believe that government has a right to take taxpayer money to basically be a bank for businessmen who are creating affordable housing and making money. I just don't think it's a worthwhile use of my taxes, you know send my taxes, you know, here's my tax money to help educate my children. That would be wonderful. But you know, I didn't, let's talk about teachers in Greenwich, you know, I spoken to them, they're wonderful. You know, it's like, okay, here's the thing. If we keep increasing taxes to pay for everything for everyone, we're going to turn into a

communist state. No one wants to live here anymore because we like- I just, I don't think that it's the government's place to override local zoning laws.

REP. SMITH (48TH): Well, okay. Well, thank you for that answer. I appreciate you sharing your views with us today. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you very much, Representative Smith.

KIMBERLY SALIB: Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Ms. Salib, there's one more question or comment from Representative Lemar. I do just want to take a moment though, to clarify for those who may be watching at home. Obviously I am new to the Transportation Committee and have only had a chance to read this Bill over the weekend, but for the purposes of clarity, because you mentioned, you know, aside from the zoning implications, that there may be sort of tax increase contemplated in legislation that is just not contained in the Bill. There is nothing in this Bill that increases tax rates. And I want that to be abundantly clear, but now I'll hand it over to Representative Lemar.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Senator Haskell. And thank you, Ms. Salib, for your testimony today on behalf of the Greenwich RTM I had a quick point of clarification. The restrictions on the free market are actually not imposed by this legislation. The restrictions on the free market are already imposed, and it's actually lessens the restrictions on the free market. In fact, the testimony --

KIMBERLY SALIB: Wait, stop. I need you to stop here because -- wait I'm so sorry [crosstalk].

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Ms. Salib, I am so sorry, I'm going to have to mute you if you interrupt a good Representative. Unfortunately he does have, he

is going to finish his remarks and then you'll have an opportunity to respond.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, the restrictions on the free market are actually already in place, and this will lessen the restrictions on the free market as we've received testimony from the home builders associations and numerous other individuals that is an artificial constraint in Connecticut, specifically around our transit stations. Most other states in the country have much more leniency on restrictions on what is allowed to be built around transportation assets.

And I think that's what this Bill proposes to do is to maximize the investment that we are making the, for example, the Greenwich train stations. Those are multiple scores of millions of dollars worth of upstate investment on top of a multi-billion dollar transportation asset. And if you're not maximizing the investment this state has made in both the stations and the rail line, we'll lose the ability to take advantage of that resource and that is allowing occupancy, you know, more people moving into our communities. If you just do a quick Google right now of the Greenwich train stations, we would see a huge expanse of parking, lots, almost completely empty large portions of the day.

And there's an opportunity for our state to maximize our investment. If we're just smart and strategic about that, we take advice from folks who know that there's a market there there's pent up demand for people who want to move through your wonderful town. We want to move to towns up and down are these real assets. And I think that's what we're trying to do is make it a little easier for folks to live in the wonderful places that we have in Connecticut and take advantage of these multi-billion dollar assets that we've put the money into there, and not just have these restrictions where you can only jump on the train, if you live in a town and can drive to the train station and park your car for \$700 a year

in one of those parking spots, I think that's what we're trying to get through. So I appreciate your comments, but I do think there's an opportunity for us to be smarter and how we maximize our state assets particularly at the magnitude we've made. I appreciate it thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Representative Lemar and Ms. Salib, we are going to take you off mute now, so you have a chance to respond, but I do feel strongly and obviously I am new to this Committee and I respect that, but it's now my third year in the general assembly, and it is the practice and every Committee that these public hearings are an opportunity for respectful dialogue, where members of the public, and also Representatives have an opportunity to speak generally without interruptions.

So Ms. Salib, I'm going to give you an opportunity to respond before we go over to Ms. Devlin. I'm sorry. Representative Devlin, Mr. Clerk, are we having technical difficulties getting Ms. Salib off mute? I have called into one of this Ms. Salib, you might have to press star six to get yourself off mute. If you wouldn't mind doing that for us, you know what, why don't we move to Representative Devlin to ask her question and hopefully in the interim we will be able to bring you off mute.

I don't think it's something that can happen on our end. I believe on your phone, you'd have to press star six. So Representative Devlin, if it's okay with you, perhaps Ms. Salib can respond to both your question and Representative Lemar's question.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Actually, Mr. Chairman, I really have an observation to make and being new to the Committee or not. You may concur, but we have spent a tremendous amount of time talking about housing and zoning to issues that are not the purview of the Transportation Committee. So I think that this just reinforces perhaps the

inappropriateness of this being before this Committee. So just wanted to share that. Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Fair enough, Representative. I look forward to learning more about each of the Bills that are before this Committee and hopefully discussing them with, with members from both parties as to next steps. So I appreciate your thoughts. Ms. Salib, are you able to get yourself off of mute? It looks as though you are still muted and I really apologize. So we're going to allow you to stay in the meeting as we move on to the next witness in case you would like an opportunity to respond. I don't in any way we want you to feel as though you don't have a chance to voice your opinion to this Committee, Mr. Clerk, any technical update for us?

PHIL MAINIERO: She still appears to be in the meeting. I think she's having some trouble with our muting so as we move to the next speaker, I will try and call her myself and work through some issues with her.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): I appreciate that. Thank you very much. So next we will move to Steve Landa. Mr. Landa, are you with us today? Oh man, it's a tough day for technical issues in the Transportation Committee. Mr. Landa, I'm going to give you a moment to unmute yourself if you are there. Okay, we're going to move then we will circle back. We'll move to Elycia Solimene. Good morning-- Good afternoon.

ELYCIA SOLIMENE: I am speaking in support of Senate Bill 608, Tristin's law. I am a small business owner in the state of Connecticut. I'm also an attorney and a mother of four, so I wanted to speak and perhaps provide a different perspective. I am an insurance defense attorney. So the nature of my law firm is to defend businesses, small businesses and protect their interests. However, one of my clients is a bus company who services hundreds of kids throughout the state and in representing them, I've

been privy to see the diligence that their business you know, operates under when it concerns the safety of children.

Now, obviously the area of buses and the stop signs is heavily regulated. And it should be so because we're obviously talking about the transportation of our children, that being said I'm sure everyone listening can recall back to our own childhoods when you hear those ice cream truck jingles. And I remember being a kid and hearing that and almost like an instinct of panic where you run, you get some money and you start chasing the ice cream truck down the street. If it happened to have already passed your house.

The emotion in the mind of a child, when you hear that noise is not thinking about safety in the sense that no matter how many times I tell my kids, you know, look before you cross the street or pay attention, they get swept up when they hear that noise, this perhaps is even a more dangerous situation than crossing the street to get on a school bus, because I don't think kids are necessarily as excited to go to school. Most of the time they might be crossing the street walking, unless of course they're late.

When the ice cream trucks are coming, there's a level of excitement that it brings in kids, as I'm sure it did with Tristin. That being said, I think this is almost even more important if not equally to get something passed because I believe that there's a hole in the law in this particular instance. It's my understanding that this ice cream driver had the stop arm and of course had lights, caution lights that he could have been using.

There's a lack of uniformity in what I see. There's no regulations of what these drivers could or should be doing. Most of them already have the stop arms that being said, I've asked my client the bus company, how much the cost of a stop arm is. And

I've confirmed through the vendors that they use unity and Midwest transit that the cost of the stop arm is about \$425. This, you know, again, I'm not usually in favor of anything that would put an undue burden on a business, but \$425 as a one-time fee for a business owner who likely has already purchased a truck with the cost of which is far more substantial than a safety accessory we can call it not to mention that the entire nature of their business is to cater to children.

You know, as a lawyer, the law makes a zillion distinctions between a minor and an adult, knowing that the mental capacity of a child is obviously very different. The appreciation for danger, it's very different. You know, I can't think of the number of times my own kids have heard that jingle inside the house and I, you know, throw some money at them and they just run out the door. You know, I wouldn't even be able to catch up with them. You know, this is something that not only brings the kids joy, but parents, and without the thought that, you know, my God even a 17 year old driver, who's also a kid has no appreciation. You know, us as adults in the fast pace of our lives these days, you know, even going too fast, you know, it's, you see an ice cream truck and, you know, but you don't think of it in the same sense. You know, you don't know that you have to stop.

PHIL MAINIERO: Excuse me, I hate to interrupt you. You're starting to run right up against the time limit. If you can kind of assemble your final thoughts and we can move to question and answers.

ELYCIA SOLIMENE: That's it, basically, I just, you know, I feel that this is a void in the law and I support it as a mother, as an attorney and a small business owner that if you're going to run a business that specifically markets to children, that you have to take extra precautions to make sure that they are protected basically. So whether it's a regulation of using the stop arm, if you have it, or

at least putting caution signs on to alert oncoming traffic and anything else in the Bill. So that's, that's all, I just wanted to add my perspective in supportive Tyler and Christi, and the Bill.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you so much, Ma'am for your time and for your testimony today, we greatly appreciate your perspective and that the many hats that you wear, as you mentioned I want to turn it over now to Representative Dauphinais.

REP. DAUPHINAIS (44TH): Thank you, Senator. And thank you for your testimony today. I've been in and out of another Committee as well, and I may have missed this information. Obviously this was a devastating situation that happened to this family, and nobody wants to see that happen again. I just, you may not be able to answer this, but because I've missed some of it. Do you have any idea how many other times this may have happened in Connecticut with regard to ice cream trucks and say maybe the last 50 years? I was just curious if you knew that.

ELYCIA SOLIMENE: I personally don't know, but I know that Representative Fishbein and Senator Cicarella had been researching the issue. I was aware of one other instance in Hamden not too long ago, and this obviously happened in Cheshire, so, and I live in North Haven. So aside from, you know, the local ones, I don't have personal knowledge of that.

REP. DAUPHINAIS (44TH): Okay. Thank you. That was it. I was just wanting to kind of ascertain that, but thank you for your testimony. Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Representative Dauphinais. I see no other questions or comments from Committee members, so I thank you again, Ma'am, for your time today. And next we will hear from John Chaponis. I apologize if I mispronounced your last name, sir.

JOHN CHAPONIS: Good afternoon. No, that was perfect. John Chaponis and dear members of the Transportation Committee CWO wishes to thank your Committee for raising a 6569, an act concerning a motor vehicle registration. One of the largest growing forms of tax evasion in the state of Connecticut is the local motor vehicle tax. We heard a lot of testimony today about people who might have moved into town and hadn't registered right away, but we've actually seen cases where people have walked into our office and said, can you take this motor vehicle off of the tax rolls, it's no longer registered in Connecticut and they're handing us a registration from another state, but they still reside in Connecticut. They still own the real property.

I've gathered from the testimony that took place already that your Committee supports addressing this issue. And I'm going to change my testimony and just talk about some of the other comments. This is not just a Waterbury issue, but Waterbury should be commended on their efforts to try and address the motor vehicle fraud. This is simply a taxation enforcement issue statewide in Connecticut, as well as other states who tax motor vehicles and have experienced similar problems.

The Boston globe did a three-part story on this problem and the state of Rhode Island, where the city of Providence found they had 4,900 vehicles registered in Maine with Providence addresses. They also found more than 200 motor vehicles registered to an address in a vacant piece of land in Maine in a town with a population of only 2,400 people. There are companies who will do all the paperwork for you through the, over the internet and through the mail. They advertise it as a way to avoid taxation in your state. You never even have to step foot in Maine to register your vehicle in the state of Maine.

Maine has shown that their registrations without a state addresses have more than doubled they're up 122% in the last five years. They've actually been quoted in the newspaper as calling it economic development. And it's not just the revenue loss for taxation that state's losing out on registration fees, admissions fee, parking tickets that go on enforced local insurance agents are losing business to outer state insurance companies because the policies are sometimes being issued in Maine where they might be cheaper. And in some instances, car dealers in Connecticut are losing sales.

There's millions of dollars leaving the state of Connecticut and Waterbury has done a great job. They brought in over \$5 million, I heard in the last three years by hiring an outside company with plate readers who drives around in the middle of the night, trying to find those vehicles and then you know, trying to enforce that they pay taxes here.

So of the \$5 million they brought in, they paid out one third at \$1.5 million of taxpayer dollars had to go to a company to try to address the enforcement. And the last thing I would say was there's been some comments about farm vehicles, farm vehicles would not be a part of this issue or problem farm vehicles that remain on the farm are declared to the municipality on the personal property declaration form M 15 as required by section 12-41 at the Connecticut general statutes.

So simple language could be added to say that this would not be applicable to any unregistered motor vehicle where the owner has already declared it to the municipality pursuant to, 12-41. And if you guys had any questions, I would certainly be happy to answer them.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you so much, Mr. Chaponis for your testimony. I see Maine plates all the time and it drives me absolutely crazy. So, I'm zeroing in on that example. I see a few members of

the Committee have their hands raised. We'll start with Representative Smith followed by Representative McCarthy Vahey.

REP. SMITH (48TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Really not a question, John, as you might've imagined. I just wanted to thank you for taking the time to testify on this issue twice in a week. And I feel as though I should have just put on a mask and taken the walk while you were speaking to come down and thank you in person. But I do appreciate your advocacy for the property tax payers, not only here in the 48th district and in Colchester specifically, but for those throughout the state, in your role with your association I think it's very valuable for us to have your insight and I want to thank you too, for the research you've done and the efforts you've made to educate us on the magnitude of this problem. Thank you.

JOHN CHAPONIS: Thank you, Representative Smith. You know, the only other thing I'd like to add is I think both Bills deserve merit on their own. We need enforcement options in order to address the problem that the biggest issue with motor vehicles is they're transient and they move around and it's hard to really, you know, a lot of work goes into proving that they're coming back the same location all the time. So while there are two Bills out there, I think they both deserve merit.

REP. SMITH (48TH): Thank you, John. Thank you, Mr. chair.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you very much, Representative. Representative McCarthy Vahey.

REP. MCCARTHY (133RD): Thank you so much, Mr. Chair and Mr. Chaponis, it's nice to see you here in transportation and I just have more of a comment, although I may ask you a follow up question, Mr. Chaponis, but the two Bills are one in Planning and Development and one in transportation because we in

Planning and Development often have a lot of overlap with what happens in other Committees, whether it be judiciary, transportation, finance environment, energy and technology. There you go.

So we try, we, I can say as a chair, I've tried to ensure that we're not necessarily duplicating things. This one kind of escaped me. So I appreciate your comment about the merit of two different Bills. I will say, you know, I will need to speak with Senator Cassano, but my inclination would be to try and work together in streamline, especially in a session such as this one. I wondered if you wanted to speak to, you know, some of the differences and if you thought it made sense to combine those efforts here.

JOHN CHAPONIS: Sure. I guess that's probably the way I should have worded it is that they could have been combined. So the Bill that was in front of Planning and Development on Friday will allow the municipality to issue a fine of their own. The Bill is here today deals a lot more with law enforcement and there's plenty of small towns out there that don't have a local police department or may have a resident trooper or some don't even have a resident trooper.

So it would at least allow the municipality itself to address the issue. And that Bill would be handled a little differently. I would see it working as the town was send out a letter that says, you know, we have proof that this vehicle most commonly relieves from and returns to, you know, your location in our town. You've got 60 days to register the vehicle in Connecticut, otherwise we're going to issue a fine in the amount of X dollars, whatever it may be.

And that's designed to bring that person into the office or have them call or have them start talking to us. And you know, that's the Bill that was there last Friday. This one has part A and part B or section 1 and 2, one would put together a task

force, which I would still be supportive of because I think that this issue needs to be talked about between law enforcement, Department of Motor Vehicles and assessors to get our head around, you know, what we can do better to enforce it.

I testified on Friday and I mentioned that years ago, there used to be a registration compliance unit from the department of motor vehicles. And they used to send out a letter to the taxpayer and the necessary and say that they're now aware of a vehicle that's bearing out of state plates and they would give them 30 days to register it. They would let us know so we could address the taxation portion of it. And I was told that that unit got disbanded about 20 years ago.

So registration compliance has, has really gone unchecked for about 20 years and it's growing and growing and people see a neighbor do it for three years and no one's stopping them. And then they say, well, then I should do it too. And we just don't have enough boots on the ground to be tracing motor vehicles that are moving all over the place. So I like the taskforce option, but that's slower and it's going to take time.

And the second part of the Bill before you today, really is all put on law enforcement. And I don't, you know, unless they actually get a little bit more aggressive, there was already an existing language that would allow them to issue tickets for people running out of state plates.

REP. MCCARTHY (133RD): Mr. Chaponis I really appreciate your answer and you're taking time to differentiate between the two. And I think that's the value of sometimes hearing things in different Committees. We get to look at it from a certain frame and in this case the way you just articulated that I think was very helpful. I will say again, I will be talking with Senator Cassano would love to speak with chairman Lemar and chairman Haskell about

how we can work together on this, because it does seem to make sense to combine efforts, which I think happens in a lot of the Bills that we hear in Committee. We move to a Committee and then continue to combine efforts. Thank you so much, Mr. Chair.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Representative McCarthy Vahey, and looking forward to having that conversation with you. Senator Cassano, I'm sorry. Representative Dauphinais followed by Senator Cassano.

REP. DAUPHINAIS (44TH): Thank you Senator. And thank you, John, for your testimony. And I may have missed this information and I don't know if you know it or not. I was just looking to see, do you know how we compare to how the other 49 states handle registration with regard to requiring them to register their states and with regard to timelines and the like, I don't know if you can speak to that.

JOHN CHAPONIS: I've heard that the most common is they give them 30 days upon moving to a new state to register the vehicle. But you have to remember, I think it's a bigger problem for the states that that tax the vehicles, because I think we're only around maybe a dozen municipalities throughout the states that actually tax the motor vehicle in a lot of towns that the tax is really more of like an additional charge at DMV when you registered the vehicle, isn't actually done through the host municipality. And it's substantial when you look at the cost of, of new cars and how expensive they are today, you know a \$70,000 car pays a \$1,500 per year annual tax Bill. So if they feel by, you know, running an out of state plate, they can avoid that Bill. I think that's the reason that we're struggling here in Connecticut.

It isn't-- we're not really talking about people who've moved to Connecticut and have been slow in registering. We're talking about people who are intentionally trying to avoid the taxation and going

elsewhere, which is why I think, you know, Maine's out of registrations to out of state addresses has more than doubled up 122% in the last five years. And that doesn't include the vehicles that have been registered to a Maine address because some of the companies that are willing to register your vehicle for you are registering them to their address.

So we don't even know that the true dollar amount on the revenue loss, but we do know we collect \$950 million a year across the entire state on motor vehicle taxation. So even if you were to pick a small number and say 3% of the people were trying to avoid it, that's 30 million a year before you get into registrations and emissions and, and all the other loss that goes along with it. It's substantial.

REP. DAUPHINAIS (44TH): Thank you for that answer. And I may have missed it, but are people doing this in Maine because you're not required to be a resident there to register a vehicle?

JOHN CHAPONIS: That's absolutely correct. Maine definitely makes it the easiest. They advertise it. They that they have actually boasted and called it economic development. Their fees are very cheap, even for registration. I don't remember the number, but it might be like \$38 a year, whereas Connecticut might be around \$140 for two years. So even the registration fee itself is cheap, but there's a company in Montana that advertises specifically for RVs and, you know, creates a limited liability company that owns the RV and the makes the LLC in Montana and, and, you know, they work around it that way. There are companies that actually advertise this as a way to avoid local taxation.

REP. DAUPHINAIS (44TH): So can you tell me, I know I asked you in the beginning and maybe I didn't get the answer, but do you know how many states don't require you to live there and allow you to register a vehicle there?

JOHN CHAPONIS: I apologize. I do not know that I know Maine seems to be the one that's most willing to do everything through the mail, but I'm not sure of what the requirements are and other states. And that's a great question because we asked, you know, we tried to reach out to DMV to see if the commissioner and DMV could talk to the DMV commissioner in Maine or address it that way. But that's a great question. And I apologize, I don't know the answer.

REP. DAUPHINAIS (44TH): Thank you so much, sir. And thank you, Senator.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): No problem at all. Thank you, Representative Dauphinais. Next we will go to Senator Cassano followed by Representative Reyes.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Thank you Mr. Chairman. John, welcome. Wearing a different hat today. The numbers you just mentioned \$30 million, I think you said when we look at that, if we're losing that kind of money then, one of the things we complain about as Connecticut citizens is the amount that we pay in that local property tax on the automobile. It helps-- It helps us in a lot of different ways in our cities and towns, but it probably would be a lot more stable or even less if everybody was paying their fair share. And that's the issue I think that we were discussing here is fair share.

It bothers me that people can skirt the law and that places like Maine can advertise and convince you to register your car there so that you can be doing your fair share. And so I'm wondering you know, what could we do collectively if DMV can't do this you know, does it make sense to look at to try and hire somebody either through state, a local or a combination to track down these places.

And why I say that I've got a fella right here in Manchester and another one in Glastonbury, they must

spend hours tracking down these license plates that are out of state and they tell me they could tell you how many hours that car has been in their driveway. What they have a life of the car. This is what they do to kill time, I guess. But they're frustrated because they pay their fair share. So what can-- we can talk about laws, we can talk about ways to do things. What can we really do to effectively bring about a change and make it fair for everybody?

JOHN CHAPONIS: That's a great question.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): [crosstalk] question, John but --

JOHN CHAPONIS: No, it's not. It's a great question, Senator Cassano and you know, I'm not trying to pass the buck, but I think that, you know, assessors can't write a ticket. We can't even run an out of state plate. You know, if you have a Connecticut plate, I can look it up. I have online access to Connecticut DMV, but I can't even run an out of state plate. So I pay for a private service called nexus Lexus. It's an additional cost. I think it's two 50 a month and it won't get you every out of state plate. But if they've used that plate in conjunction with their names somewhere, it comes back and it ties back.

I took an intern from MCC, a girl studying to become a police officer. She worked for me for one semester for free. And she went around taking pictures of the vehicles and driving by in the houses and documenting when they were there, incredibly tedious her and a couple of my employees we all sat on Dunkin donuts Starbucks from five in the morning until nine, and took a picture of every out of state plate. And there's a lot of them. And Representative Smith can tell you, we don't have a hotel, a bed and breakfast, or, you know, any reason why people from out of state would be staying in our town and grabbing a coffee to go to work in the morning. So

then we had to drive around and spot them here enough times in order to add up.

And just in our town, it ended up being over a million dollars in vehicles that we added. It was like \$38,000 in taxes, which might not sound like a lot, but multiply that times 169 and you get \$6.4 million. So I actually think in some towns, the problems a lot greater than it is here in mind. But, you know, if the police officers, you know, we're getting greater direction from upstairs and when they pulled over a vehicle without a state plates, if the driver's license was Connecticut or if the address was Connecticut on the out of state registration, I mean, I think the enforcement could be a lot stricter on the law enforcement side.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Thank you. And John, I know you've got lots of meetings, but with P and D and with this Committee I'd love to have you on a couple of the assessors, come in and maybe get someone other police chief for leaders of the police chiefs association. And why don't we have a discussion and see if we can move something forward that involves 169. All of the cities and towns sort of we're on the same page and doing the same thing. And maybe we can make something happen. I appreciate your help.

JOHN CHAPONIS: Thank you, sir.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Senator Cassano. And next we'll go to Representative Reyes, followed by Representative Meskers. Mr. Chaponis, you're a popular guy today.

REP. REYES (75TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair, just, I'm going to have a quick question to Mr. John, and it has to do with city of Waterbury, for instance, has a large population of renters. How would this be handle, how are renters be handled and what does he think we could do different to address the renters that are abusing this situation? Thank you.

JOHN CHAPONIS: You know, renters are certainly, you know, even more transit because they do move around. I've always been less concerned with getting the taxes in my town than seeing that they're paying taxes to some town in Connecticut. So I've always tried to tackle it globally. I think Waterbury is using you know, an outside company that has plate readers. They do document the vehicle their numerous times over a 90 day period before they go after it.

But there's great costs there as well. This is a difficult tax to enforce because the taxable property is transient. And you know, part of my answer is it's always going to be difficult, whether they're a property owner or a resident, because a lot of times their car is in a non-COVID situation, their cars at work when we're working a lot of times, me and one of my employees, we work nights and weekends, you know, sometimes and flex the hours just to be able to chase it all.

So you know, Senator Cassano mentioned putting everybody in the same room, the first part of this Bill that we're talking about today before your Committee does talk about a task force. Normally I'm not a big fan of task force because I think you know, it's the way to sort of kick the can down the road and not really address it, but there are, you know, three different issues or three different groups that need to work together and explain what the problems are. And at the end of the day, everyone in law enforcement, DMV and assessors, all our salaries are paid for, with public funds and taxpayer dollars. And I think we have a duty and responsibility to, you know, find a way to address this issue, or it's just going to continue to mushroom and get worse.

REP. REYES (75TH): Well, thank you very much for that explanation. It is absolutely a challenge, but as you stated already, we have to start somewhere and there's absolutely lost revenues that can be

reclaimed. So thank you for your answer and thank you, Mr. Chair.

JOHN CHAPONIS: Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thanks so much Representative. I finally will move to Representative Meskers.

REP. MESKERS (150TH): Thank you very much. John, thank you for your testimony. I'll say again, what I've said three or four times. I keep on jumping up and down about insurance and it's not because I sit on insurance. This is my first session there, but it's that when you look on, you know, when I Google search and look, you know, you are required to insure your car in your where the-- with registration in the state you reside in.

So there's a public health and safety concern that the car is-- and the insurance you get is actually valid and actionable. So you have, I think the other leg in this conversation, and we have to worry about freedom of information. You have to worry about how we cross the information among the groups and people's privacy. But if you have people residing in the state of Connecticut and they have the car registered out of state at a fake address and they're buying insurance, or they have insurance in that address, you know, we've got the whole circle where there's a public safety issue involved as well. So I encourage you that we should look at that as well in this.

JOHN CHAPONIS: I appreciate that.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you Representative Meskers. Mr. Chaponis, thank you for your time and for your testimony today. I don't see any further questions, but I do appreciate you being with us.

JOHN CHAPONIS: Thank you very much.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Okay. We're going to move now to Mr. Ted Schroll. Before we do so there was a previous speaker who was disconnected due to technical difficulties. She did ask that the Committee leadership clarify that she was not speaking on behalf of the Greenwich RTM, although she may have used that affiliation when she signed up, she was speaking on behalf of herself only. So for the Committee's general awareness, I did want to make that clear. Mr. Schroll, are you with us today?

TED SCHROLL: Yes, I am sir. Senator?

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Good to see you.

TED SCHROLL: You too. Senator Haskell, congratulations on your promotion. And Senator Cassano, Senator Somers, Representative Lemar and Representative Carney. My name is Ted Schroll, legislative Representative for the Connecticut State Firefighters Association. Our association represents practically 26,000 career and volunteer firefighters in Connecticut. And I appreciate the opportunity to address the Committee.

The fire service has concerns with section 18 of Senate Bill 982, section 18, of this Bill would change the present Blue light statute and would allow a volunteer ambulance personnel to use blue flashing lights. It deletes the portion of statute that that currently allows ambulance personnel to use green flashing lights and make it clear then I'm speaking for the fire service and not for the ambulance service.

I've submitted some written testimony. So I'll try to summarize that a bit. Begin the flashing blue light has become the identifier, the distinguishing factor of a volunteer firefighter. I feel safe I saying that great majority of these 26,000 dedicated volunteers display a blue light on their personal vehicles.

We respectfully request that you delete section 18 of this Bill, which would expand the use of flashing blue lights to any other group of individuals except volunteer firefighters. Its passage could cause much confusion to connect motorists and have a serious detrimental effect on the quality of service provided by volunteer firefighters.

Blue lights were first approved by ease for use by volunteer firefighters through public act 46, the 1951 session of the general assembly, the 1974 legislative session public act, 7499 was passed by the Connecticut general assembly, which assigned the green light as recognition for volunteer ambulance association members private vehicles. Upon researching the histories of these statutes, there've been very few, if any substantive changes from these statutes from their conception to date.

In many states, these types of lights are called courtesy lights because they're not. They're used to request the right away for volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel to expedite their response in privately owned vehicles. In Connecticut, like most states, other vehicles they're not required to yield to the vehicle displaying the courtesy lights hence the name courtesy.

Law's requiring permits for those using courtesy lights vary by state. We do not wish to diminish the activities where the groups as each of us has their own mission, but I would request would question whether it flashing blue light provide the level of courtesy others may feel they need. Most people, fire officers will tell you that there are a number of motors that will not even move to the side of the road for a large fire truck with red lights, responding to any emergency personnel would still be required to stop at any traffic control lights and signs and obey all legal speed limits.

The Connecticut state statute and vehicle lawfully displaying courtesy lights is not an emergency

response vehicle. In researching this is testimony. And I won't go into that all my years of the general assembly, my various groups requesting a statute change to allow their organization use flashing lights. A military group in 2008 and animal control officials in 2016, dive teams, canine search teams and EMS organizations in 2016. In fact, in 2016 raised Bill 5406 was proposed and included almost the exact same language as section 18. Questions were raised within an armed fire service community is a statement that seems disingenuous of EMS to need a change of color lights to the same as firefighters after 47 years, what is the desired results are not achieved? Will they move to the next color? Is the EMS community attempting an awareness campaign to improve the green light recognition?

And there's a couple of online written testimonials and a couple of examples of confusion factors with most promoters and both within our emergency services. We'll not oppose any attempt by these organizations to use another color of flashing light. In fact, this group already has the flashing green light assigned as an identifier within state statute.

We respectfully request that the Committee delete section 18 of this Bill before pack fetish. We feel it would not accomplish what the teams expect to achieve and will tend to further confuse the motoring public. If I may, in my favorite run out of time yet show you the just how say toxic this issue with I'm going to fire people at 20 after 8:00 this morning, I got a call from the fire chief in Simsbury and part of what I have just he also-- DMV Bill contains a provision to allow volunteer ambulance services to use a blue or green flashing lights.

This creates not only confusion for the motorist, but also for the volunteer who may think they're missing a call by seeing a blue light being used in town. Is it a fire call or ambulance? Why are we

recreating this confusion? And then just before 10 o'clock when we went on air, I got a call-- also got a call from the fire chief who sticks up in Bolton with exactly the same questions.

So I just reiterate a little bit of one-- a little one more with my talking points is, blue lights do not allow emergency response? Blue lights is the identifier of volunteer firefighters create motor's confusion firefighters responding in one direction or ambulance teams responding in the other direction, both having blue lights going in opposite directions.

The need, why change now after 47 years and one major factor ambulance people may have a concern with passing this legislation would require an ambulance company members to purchase all new lights. They have to start all over again and considerable expense. That ends my testimony, Mr. Chair any questions that I'd be able to help answer the questions.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you so much, sir, for your time and for your testimony. I see that Representative Carney has his hand raised. Representative.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Thank you very much. I did just see that my connection is unstable, so hopefully I don't freeze. Thank you, Mr. Schroll for your testimony. I guess I mean, I just have a couple of questions and if you could maybe answer the first one is, and, you know, correct me if I'm wrong, but would there be any confusion now if somebody was driving to the scene versus somebody driving to the fire department to go to a scene and if there would be, I mean, would there be any confusion with that?

TED SCHROLL: Probably not as much because if each one of them is, are both are fire persons, both of them know where they're going or in what mode they're in, one knows the one's going to the

firehouse and the other one knows it probably going to the other direction to the fire scene.

So, I mean, at least in that case, the two fire people are living, as they say, within the fire department, they would have the same information and have an idea. And in a lot of times, each in municipalities, small municipality like ours, sometimes certain people know that Joe was going for the truck and Mike is going to the other way for something else.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Okay. Do you know if there are - how many states or what other states have this differentiating light color for volunteer fire versus volunteer ambulance?

TED SCHROLL: Well, I do, unfortunately I wasn't unable to try and figure out how to put this out. Back in 2016, I put together a white paper for Senator Larson when he was the head of public safety. And it has a listing in here at one those new app that I had to try and get it to you somehow and if in these times, if we were in the capital, I would have it with me and I could hand it right through there, but we didn't include that in this white paper at the time-

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Okay -

TED SCHROLL: It is available, I'm not sure where I got it from at this point, but in fact, there's a list starts with a listing of Alabama and on down, and a list of which towns are, which states have, and some states have different color lights. Some people states use red for fire versus Uber policing. So there's each one does their own thing.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Right. Okay. Well, I mean, if you have-- if you have the ability to send that to the Committee, I would like to take a look at that cause I did read your testimony. So I was curious to see that report. You know, one of my concerns, I

guess, is the fact that DOT is now using, I guess, would be a combination of green and gold on their vehicles. So it kind of I guess reduces the effectiveness of a green light. So I was a little disappointed to read that.

But you know, the one thing though that cause a constituent did bring this up to me and I was reading the Bill you had mentioned in public safety and it looked like, I think a Darian constituent brought that up to the state Representative down there. So it's obviously something that some of us are hearing.

And I think the problem is, I mean, a blue light is much more effective than a green light. I think when people see flashing blue or flashing red, or obviously the combination of the two, they think of the police. So what are most people do when they see a police car they pull over? So we're kind of I guess, wired to pull over for those colors. So I think that's sort of the issue here is the green. I don't think a lot of us know that's, I mean, I didn't know prior to this, that that's what those flashing green lights were for. So I think probably the general public doesn't know that.

So you know, it's one of those things that I think, you know, may, you know, it's just not as effective in my view. Not as effective as that blue flashing light, but you know, I certainly understand your concerns and I appreciate you coming here to testify today and I look forward to taking a look at that report you made up for the public safety Committee a few years ago.

TED SCHROLL: Okay. well if I may answer Mr. Chair yeah, my Representative, Representative [Bello][sic], is [Murren Bello] [sic] is in town, I see if I can contact her and maybe pass this to her and maybe they'll pass that along for you, if that's, we'll try to work something out that way -

REP CARNEY (23RD): Sure.

TED SCHROLL: You made a comment on the green light, I have seen those on the state trucks. Now they've got the newer the ones I've seen the newer LED type lights and they're quite bright. I was very surprised to see that the green light was as bright as it is those ones in the back of the state trucks. So that may be an alternative. Again, if the people are going to have to buy-- the ambulance people are going to buy blue lights, maybe they could reinvest in you know the new style green light. It just appears to be, to me a lot more effective because maybe it immediately caught my eye when I saw it, because I figured where'd that come from, you know, all of a sudden, maybe that's an alternative to look at too.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): All right. Well again, Mr. Schroll, thank you for coming here to testify today. And you know, again, I'm sure we'll have additional conversation in the future.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Mr. Schroll. Thank you, Representative Carney. I look forward to working with you on this legislation. I don't see any further questions or comments, so again, we appreciate your time and your testimony, Mr. Schroll. Thanks so much.

TED SCHROLL: Thanks so much.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Next we will move to Janet Cling. Good afternoon Ma'am?

JANET CLING: Hi. I'm sorry. I was wondering if the Committee could just come back to me in five minutes. I'm just, I have to go pick up my kid and I'm just on the road right now, but I will be parked in five minutes.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Absolutely, there's no problem.

JANET CLING: Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): We don't want to force anyone into a situation with distracted driving. So let's move to Jaime Szyszka. I am so sorry if I mispronounced your last name, Ma'am. No, I can't hear you yet. Nothing yet, can other-- it could be a problem on my end are other members of the Committee able to hear Jaime? No. I'm sorry about that. Do you want to touch base with our clerk about the technical issues and we can circle back to you as well? All right, hang on, let's try it again. No, still nothing. I'm so sorry about that. Let's say let's come back to you, Jaime, if that's okay. And in the meantime we will move to Xuyen Le. Hi, how are you? I'm so sorry. We had technical difficulties. So I go-- we can hear you go right ahead.

XUYEN LE: You can hear me. You can see me. I'm sorry. I'm a little under the weather. So my voice is a little raspy. Everyone, chair, co-chair, members of the Transportation Committee. My name is Xuyen Le. I'm from Waterbury, Connecticut. I am here to provide testimony and support SB 982 specifically, section 19, which adds language to include the Vietnamese and opening into the testing language.

So I originally had, as I said, I'm from Waterbury. I've lived here my whole pretty much my whole life. My family came here in 1990 or probably 31 years. I've been here ever since I went to school here. College lived here, everything. I am very fortunate to be you know, Vietnamese American, and I feel like I have the best of both worlds.

So I originally had a written testimony, but as I was watching the webinar you know, I was hearing a lot of frustration about the DMV registration and cars being, you know, just registering out of state, people aren't paying taxes here. And I would like to

provide a little bit of my perspective on that. You know, I've been hearing the word fraud, abuse, tax evasion or tax avoidance, but I think there's maybe other underlying issues that could be maybe assessed. There are no statistics out there that are available to the public, so I wasn't able to find anything. And this all circles back to adding Vietnamese and Albanian as a testing language.

So every 10 years we, you know, we provide the census, well, the census comes out with the survey and then the population and the minority percentages are determined. And Connecticut has a statute that says, okay, we have to testing English and Spanish. And then we'll only provide written languages for those 1% population, you know, if it meets the census threshold.

So the census is that point in time. And it just doesn't take into account every event happens during the span of 10 years. So what people are doing is 10 years ago, Vietnamese was on-- Vietnamese Albanian, actually 11 other languages were on the DMV list. So now the census came back 10 years ago and all like we, Vietnamese people are being community amongst others. We didn't meet the 1% threshold. So what happened, Connecticut removed all of these languages. And now all of these people are struggling to take the exam. They're struggling to pass the test. There's no system, there's no statistics available to say, okay, well, we see that there's, you know, 60% of the people failing the DMV written test are minorities. And they can't speak English. They're taking it five times, 10 times, and they're still failing.

So what are people doing? I'd like to share some of this. And it's another underlying reason as to why you're seeing so many out of state vehicles, like one at my community you know, as well as other minority communities that were removed from the testing that were going on other state to take these exams because you know, they offer it in our

language. Massachusetts offers Vietnamese. So you will see Massachusetts license plate. I know there's people who are genuinely you know, trying to pay less taxes-- I'm sorry.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): I know. We apologize. Go right ahead.

XUYEN LE: That's okay. So I think like in Maine, New York Massachusetts, I see a lot of that, I've read those articles couple of years ago. So what I've noticed is the Albanian language is actually offered in New York. So those communities are going to New York to take those exams, getting registered there, and then coming back, but not like the other communities that don't have languages here are going to Massachusetts because Massachusetts offers 26 plus languages.

Now I think Connecticut is doing a disservice by not incorporating these minority groups. The census is not enough for you know, to determine which groups are with ethnicities to include or disclude, because it's just not a short enough span of time to see where the population is moving. So a lot of these people are coming you know, back then people were coming to Connecticut because, you know, they were leaving their country for political asylum, whatnot.

Now that the generations have grown my generation, you know, my parents, like we have family, we have a life here. We're bringing other people here. We want them to stay here. We want them to live here, but the problem is they can't pass a simple DMV exam and what are they doing? Okay. So they leave that either go to another state, take the exam pay you know, it's not that they don't want to pay the tax in Connecticut. It's just a catch 22. You know, you take, you try to be a good citizen. You take the test five times, 10 times, you don't pass. And then you can't navigate through the government. Like they don't know where to go, but I had a hard time even

understanding how to get on the agenda today. Rob Sampson, Senator Sampson help me.

So, you know, I think that there's language I think that our statutes could be maybe updated, revised to be with the times, take into account feed minorities that aren't being included in the, you know, the census. It's just doesn't depict the minorities. It really doesn't-- you know a lot of the times. And I think maybe a lot of people take for granted that they understand English. And for example, my parents don't understand the significance of the census. They don't understand that, you know, funding comes from filling it out.

PHIL MAINIERO: Ms. Le, I hate to interrupt you, you've reached the time that is allowed for everybody I you wouldn't mind finalizing your thoughts so that Members can move to question and answers.

XUYEN LE: Sure. I'm just, you know, I want to thank you everyone for listening, and I hope that you take, you know, everything I've said into consideration and include us in your talks for at least take this into perspective when you are discussing the vehicle registration. It's not as simple, clear cut the root cause everyone is trying to, you know, not pay taxes. So thank you again. And I'm happy to answer any questions.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you so much, Ms. Le, we really appreciate your time and your testimony today. I see that Representative Thomas has her hand raised.

REP. THOMAS (143RD): Thank you so much- Thank you for your testimony. I'm so glad you brought this up because when I was reading the bill and I saw all the languages for the written test, I was actually shocked because I remember when I took my driver's test many, many decades ago, even then there were more languages available. And but I had not thought

of the crossover, like what happens if you fail that test a few times, what lengths you might go to.

And you hit upon another concern I had, which was tying at the census data because we know that that can often be unreliable, especially in communities that are traditionally undercounted. So I'm just curious, because it sounds like you've been very thoughtful about this. If you have any ideas about what data the languages could be tied to, or you know, any thoughts about what Connecticut should look at?

XUYEN LE: I haven't thought about another way to assess the population here. But I will say something that may be, that may sound stereotypical, at least for the Vietnamese people. We are a big, like a bigger community than people think. I mean, you look around and we own most of the nails salons. I mean, we, don't not all of them, but most of them, I mean, you may not see us around walking on the street, but we're there.

I mean, it's just maybe you take into consideration some of like the businesses that are registered with the secretary of state that maybe that's one way of accounting for the minorities. I just, I don't know, but I'm, I'm confident that Connecticut will come up with something, maybe not in the short-term, but pretty close because I mean, we adapted to COVID so, well, I mean, the DMV got on, got everyone online. I got my license mailed to me. I didn't have to go to the DMV.

And, you know, just a lot of the times throughout the years, we hear people complain about the DMV or this and that, but I thought like they just, they turned everything around so fast. And I was like my process to getting everything online was so easy and there was no confusion and the web looks good. So there's ways. I mean, there's a lot of smart people, but that's just, I think the first thing that maybe

comes to mind is, you know, looking at the businesses and-

REP. THOMAS (143RD): Yeah, I know, I thank you for that. And I certainly did not want to put you on the spot. I just thought about you've talked about this a lot. So I appreciate that idea to pass along and I could love to see section 19 amended to address this issue. So thank you for coming today and thank you, Mr. Chair.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Representative Thomas and Ms. Le. I don't see any other questions or comments from Committee members, but we are really grateful for your insights and for your patients over the course of this hearing.

XUYEN LE: Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Okay, next, we're going to circle back to Jaime. Jamie is your sound working now?

JAIME SZYSZKA: Can you hear me?

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Yes, we can hear you.

JAIME SZYSZKA: Wow, yeh, it worked.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): All right. Go right ahead, Ma'am.

JAIME SZYSZKA: Okay. Thank you. Good afternoon. My name is Jamie Szyszka and I want to thank you for allowing me to speak today in regards to Bill 608, the Tristin's law. As a mother, you start early as a new parent safe proofing things for your child. We buy baby gates, fitted, breathable, cribs, sheets, door guards, bike helmets. And as they grow older, we utilize social media screening tools and apps that monitor their usage. Why? Because they're available to us.

I believe when resources and tools are available to us, we should use them every day whether you're a parent, a school teacher or a bus driver, you'll do everything in your power to keep your audience safe with the ultimate goal being to keep the community safe and children's safe. Unfortunately we know that not everything in life is within our control. Sadly, last June, we were all reminded of this.

I have nothing but love for the family and the community that was impacted by this tragic accident. As a member of this community, I ask that you consider passing Bill number 608, the Tristin law, let's encourage investment and education by utilizing resources and tools that will keep ice cream trucks safely on our roads, this law as a teachable moment for all that we can do better and we can do more together. Let's use the tools that are available to us. We all have an opportunity that can prevent this tragedy from happening again.

No parent should lose a child and no parent should have to explain to their children the loss of their childhood friend. We unfortunately can't take back what happened to our little friend, but together we can make sure Tristin's memory that some accidents in life do not occur. Thank you for listening.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you so much for your testimony. And we've been so grateful for all the folks who spoke up in the wake of Tristin's passing to get this Bill on the Committee's agenda. I really appreciate you being with us today to voice your support. I don't see any questions or comments from Committee members, but thanks for circling back and resolving those technical issues.

JAIME SZYSZKA: Thank you very much.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Ms. Cling, are you ready for us?

JANET CLING: Hi. yes, I'm parked, but I just have bad reception here. So I hope you guys don't lose me.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): No worries. There's a broadband Bill in another Committee that might fix that. But in the meantime, go right ahead.

JANET CLING: Thank you, chairman. Dear chairman Lemar and Haskell, Ranking members and esteem Committee members of the Transportation Committee. I am Janet Cling of Darien and I am a mother of four. I am testifying today in opposition of Bill HB 6570. I am supportive of affordable housing. But which is why I feel that this Bill will not achieve the goal of increasing affordable housing, but will lead to the cancellation of resident's voice, completely.

I have familiarized myself with desegregate CT's platforms, and actually support their ADU and training of planning and zoning commission ideas. But the idea of by right permitting, which is allowing developers to build a multifamily homes while bypassing local planning and zoning commission hearings of commissions that we have elected to represent us in is a major problem for me. I want to explain why I think it's both dangerous and ineffective in addressing the formal housing inventory issue.

The argument that developers should follow a less onerous process than the one currently in use is misguided. Some of CTS towns don't even have zoning regulations, but this hasn't spurred development in these locations when they could have built under 830-G. These developers have actively chosen not to build because there is less or sometimes zero profit to be made in affordable housing. From what I understand from friends in the building and builders in fact could lose a lot of money building affordable housing, and it is expensive to build because return on investment is so low that it's rarely economically viable.

And a question I think was asked earlier by maybe Representative O'Dea about state providing incentives. That's already happening now. And because affordable housing is already in a forever state of subsidy by the state. Here in Darien, where I live we've implemented inclusionary zoning, where developers are required to build 12% below market rate units also known as affordable when they build more than five units.

However, I do not see such affordability requirement in this Bill for developers. This is at the fact that the authors of this Bill, as well as de-segregate CT movement and their website understand that developers are driven by profit margin. And there's themselves worried about scaring off developers from actually pursuing these projects. And if you know, if they were to include language requiring actual below market rate units to be provided de-segregate CT's Representatives claim that with more housing supply prices will come down. That is I don't --inaccurate and disingenuous of a statement, I think because we know it will not come down far enough to be affordable by low-income families. Yet it will decrease property value of neighboring single family homes, just enough to devastate Fairfield county's land wealth.

When that happens, property tax receipts will be reduced. So we will be forced to raise mill raise, to obtain the same level of property taxes that we're getting today. And that will further harm the few low-income families that were able to obtain affordable housing in some of these towns. Also the assumption that low-income families don't need to drive when they live close to the train is wrong. Metro north rail tickets prices are actually very expensive and the frequency of the routes are not nearly flexible enough to meet the needs of low income workers.

Secondly, I assume everyone on this Committee, especially probably is familiar with governor Lamont's latest budget plan that has a combined \$82 million worth of savings over two years from 2022 to 2023 from reducing bus and rail services that is alliance share of the efficiencies that he's seeking. So I don't know how does this Committee plan to reconcile that reduction of services with transit oriented development that this Bill allows by right, for developers. without an affordability requirement in this Bill, the only people that can afford to actually live in these units are young professionals without kids empty nesters, downgrading from their single family homes who are already from these towns, as opposed to bringing in outside low-income families.

I fear that we're simply pressing control and wealth from local taxpayers to developers removing the vetting of local planning and zoning boards who conducted extensive impact analysis on each town's infrastructure and services and imposed potentially impose fees to address these issues. It is very concerning that the state would take such a heavy handed approach and have, you know, having local residents and mandating us that we turn control over to the building industry without any guaranteed to actually benefit low-income families. Thank you for hearing my testimony and I'm happy to answer any questions.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you so much for your time and for your testimony today. I share your concern that I'm a believer that we need more housing opportunities. I also strongly believe that we need to ensure those housing opportunities are affordable and too often, that's not the case. I see that Representative O'Dea has his hand raised. Representative.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and Ms. Cling, thank you very much for your testimony. Did

you say you're in Darien? Are you on the RTM or what is your position?

JANET CLING: No, I'm actually. Hi, Representative O'Dea. I'm not on the RTM, I'm just a private citizen. I'm passionate and I am interested in you know, local politics, but I don't, you know, I'm a mother of four with four little kids. I don't really have the capacity to be in an official position to advocate.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Well, thank you so much. You and I are on the same page on this Bill and our thoughts and trying to help those with more affordable housing as the good chair had said, both the chairman and I share a district and both are advocates of local control. How would you-- how would you-- heard me recommend somewhat of a carrot approach and yes, the state does offer some incentives, but I probably should have been more specific or I may have misspoken.

I'm thinking about offering more because New Canaan for example, has been building out their affordable housing and we've gotten to the 10%. And so my thought was providing more incentives for the town and providing more costs because affordable housing is more expensive to build. And then my thought was providing tax credits or some sort of credit for builders for some period of time to encourage the affordable housing, because if they build it and make it affordable, that there's less of an income stream. So I guess my open-ended question to you is how would you see this Bill being improved if you thought that far out?

JANET CLING: Thank you for that question, Representative O'Dea. I think Representative Lemar earlier had spoken to how restrictive current zoning laws are in some of these towns around the train stations that are actually preventing, you know free market you know, for running free market solutions to be at work here.

But I think, you know, in improving that we don't need to, you know, over-correct and swing the pendulum all the way to buy right permitting and removing the vetting process by local planning and zoning completely, and just turning control over to, you know, developers who can just under that. And you know, this Bill, you know, and have potentially multifamily homes pop up here and they're changing the landscape of the town entirely and not even addressing the affordability issue and having, you know, market rate housing come up that we're just in hoping we'll, you know, decrease the value enough.

And what does that do to, you know, neighboring properties, right. So I think there is definitely something we should look at to maybe loosening or relaxing some of the over restrictive zoning laws. You know, I'm all for market-driven solutions and not, you know, if there's antiquated regulations that are just no longer applicable out towns should be asked to review them, but instead of just, you know, completely like throwing out the baby with the bath water and you know, going to a Bi-Rite model.

Because every town, you know, every event within each town, every train station, every, you know, bus station, the property, the areas around it are so different that you need to be evaluated extensively on an individual project by project basis.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Well Ms. Cling, thank you so much for your testimony. And while you might not have time, you you've got the very important job taking care of those kids. And I'm sure that the town of Darien could use your assistance going forward at some point when you have more time. And I thank you so much for reaching out and your testimony is very important issue. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

JANET CLING: Thank you so much for listening.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thanks Representative O'Dea. And thank you, Ms. Cling. I don't see any other questions or comments from Committee members, but we're grateful for your time and for your testimony.

JANET CLING: Thank you so much for listening and thank you for the work that you are all doing.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you. Okay. Next, we will move to Ann Gadwah. Ann are you with us this afternoon?

ANN GADWAH: Hi, I am. Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Good to see you, go right ahead.

ANN GADWAH: Nice to see you too. Representative Lemar, Senator Haskell and distinguished members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify here today. My name is Ann Gadwah advocacy and outreach organizer with Sierra club, Connecticut. I'm testifying today in support of house Bill 6570 an act concerning transit oriented development and municipal zoning.

Sierra club, Connecticut is wholly committed to solving the climate crisis we face with just an equitable solutions that will result in a healthy world for everybody. Transportation accounts for 38% of the state's total greenhouse gas emissions, which is creating a public health crisis that is disproportionately affecting black brown and low-income communities.

We support this Bill as a way to promote coordinated, planned residential improvements to transportation pollution. That includes evolving our communities to make them more walkable bikeable and with easy access to clean pollution, free public transit, ideally highest density development would be located either near existing transit or built so

it can support future transit options so that every resident has ready access to employment, food, education, and healthcare.

We support affordable housing as a human right, and believe that every neighborhood should be open to people of all income levels and backgrounds, and this can be achieved through equitable zoning, regulation and investments, and more people can benefit from sustainable smart development and enjoy improved public health, enhanced quality of life and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and other pollutants.

We believe HB 6570 supports our goal of a clean, equitable, and just Connecticut. Although there is some language to incentivize clean building standards and renewable energy, and these proposed new developments, we would like to see all new buildings in Connecticut to be held to the highest standards to improve health, economic, and climate resiliency within our communities.

We respectfully recommend this Bill include building standards that allow for only energy efficient net zero, all electric and zero embodied carbon designs, homes, and infrastructure built, now will last many decades. If we ensure buildings constructed now are prepared to comply with meeting our global warming solutions act. We will avoid costly retrofits later on. Thank you for your consideration of our testimony, and I'm happy to answer any questions.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you so much again for your time and your testimony and the perspective that you bring to this conversation. I really appreciate it. I see the Representative O'Dea has his hand raised.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you very much, Ms. Gadwah, for your testimony. What town are you in? Where are you from?

ANN GADWAH: I live in New Hartford.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): And is there any potential to you, a transit oriented development projects that are available in New Hartford? In other words, do you have a bus station or a train station?

ANN GADWAH: I believe we have one bus stop in the middle of town that comes once a day.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Okay. So, how do you now get to, and from where you're going.

ANN GADWAH: I have to drive my car.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): So your goal is to be able to move to a place where you can access the public transportation. Is that fair statement?

ANN GADWAH: I guess I would consider it. Yeah, I'm not sure what you're getting at.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): No, my question is your testimony was about improving and increasing affordable housing around transit or in developments. So you use your car less. So I guess my point is if that happens, you would, in order to avoid getting rid of your car, you would move towards, you want more TOD, Transit Oriented Development.

ANN GADWAH: Right.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): All right. Now, do you have any reservations about an as of right building in New Hartford suppose that your train stop is turned into a bus stop has turned it into a bus station. The character of New Hartford could be impacted dramatically. Would you agree with that statement?

ANN GADWAH: I suppose I would, but I, yeah, I suppose it would affect some of it.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): I mean, how long have you lived in New Hartford?

ANN GADWAH: 12 years.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): And you chose it, you chose to live there because of the character of the town presumably, or why did you choose to live in New Hartford?

ANN GADWAH: It was close to where I was working at the time and I chose to live here because this is where my husband is.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Okay.

ANN GADWAH: Owned a house.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Certainly the character of New Hartford is important to you, presumably?

ANN GADWAH: It is, but so is just an equitable solutions and desegregating the state and making it more affordable for people to live in different towns in the state. So I also consider those kinds of things and advocate for them on my local level.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Got you. So, you do a balancing test of your local character versus those other issues that you find important, including reducing emissions and whatnot, is that correct?.

ANN GADWAH: Yes. And I would, I have advocated for more public transit from New Hartford. We have one bus line that comes by twice a day that is not really accessible to most people. So any-- I'm open to any solutions that would make it more available to people that live in New Hartford in the surrounding areas.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): And how big is New Hartford?

ANN GADWAH: About 6,000 people.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Okay. So, I guess my point with this legislation is I assume in New Hartford, you don't believe Tom O'Dea from New Canaan should be telling New Hartford how to control their zoning and building up their communities. Is that a fair assessment or comment?

ANN GADWAH: I suppose so, I mean, I'm a Representative here at Sierra club Connecticut. Who's concerned with taking down greenhouse gas emissions and affordable housing. Not here necessarily as a Representative of myself, so-

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Okay. I'm sorry. All right. So you're testifying on behalf of the Sierra club, not on behalf of yourself.

ANN GADWAH: Yes. That's what I said at the beginning. Sorry.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Okay. So, well look, I guess where I come down on this is to weighing in your balancing act of, you know, in your testimony, I'm more in favor of local control, but I do greatly appreciate Ms. Gadwah, your testimony, your advocacy and coming here today and testify it's much appreciated. And thank you, Mr. Chair very much for the time.

ANN GADWAH: Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thanks Representative O'Dea. Thanks Ms. Gadwah. I see Representative Thomas has her hand raised.

REP. THOMAS (143RD): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Hello Ann, I definitely recognize that I'm sure or maybe you can tell me if you do as well. I think Transit Oriented Development as a whole is a nationwide trend for the climate change goals that you mentioned for the changing demographics of many communities to foster walkability over fossil fuel,

you know, driven technologies I assume that's true, right? This is not just the Connecticut thing.

And I also assume just based on readings that I have done that, you know, affordable housing is often also a national crisis. And I believe both of those things to be true. Transit oriented development is a great tool in some instances. And I believe that etiquette and much like the rest of the nation is involved in an affordable housing crisis. Where I have concerned this body we have about 20 or 30 Bills that someone alluded to earlier in housing issues, whether it's in this Committee, Planning and Development housing, et cetera.

And I'm just curious for your take, if you're comfortable speaking on behalf of the Sierra club, for example, there is another Bill that talks about as of right development around a main street area versus around the train station or transit hub. And there are other solutions that have been recommended. And I'm curious if you feel comfortable speaking, if you think TOD, is the only we should be using to foster these goals or are there, like, should we open up a discussion around some of these other Bills as well? --

ANN GADWAH: That's okay. I'm not familiar with some of the other, like I haven't had a chance to look at some of the other Bills that you were talking about. Sierra club Connecticut is certainly open to any discussions of solutions to, like I said, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to you know guarantee housing as a right for all in the state of Connecticut. And I would love to be able to, you know, speak about some of those other options. I'm not ready right now. Just necessarily speak about them in this meeting, but we're always open to discussion.

REP. THOMAS (143RD): No problem. I appreciate that, I feel often putting people on the spot. I appreciate working towards the solutions. And I

think it's clear we need a solution although I don't agree with some of the languages in the Bill but hopefully we can work together. Thank you.

ANN GADWAH: Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thanks so much, Mr. Gadwah. One more question from Representative Lemar.

ANN GADWAH: Great.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Mr. Gadwah for your testimony today. And thank you on being here on behalf of the Sierra club. The Sierra club has been before the Committee a few times this year on a number of issues and the organizations focus on transit equity and access has been greatly appreciated. And I appreciate you being here on behalf of them today.

The number of questions with respect to access and equity I think you are positioned well to speak about one of them is, you know, if I were, for example, to put a multimillion dollar, I put like about \$60 million transportation asset in the center of New Hartford or wherever, and then connect it to a multi-billion dollar state supported asset that connects you to the largest job center in North America. Would you think it would be responsible from an equity and access standpoint for me to only allow people to get on to that train station, if they could afford to buy an average home price, \$700,000 home on a two acre lot or only parked their car at the train station, if they can pay \$700 a year in annual fees would that fit? Let's hear what the Sierra club is thinking of when I think of transportation access and equity.

ANN GADWAH: No, Representative, that's does not seem to limit the amount of people that would be able to take advantage of transit.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): And when we talk about access and equity, as your organization has done numerous Bills before us, you have to think both about the past investments we've made and the current ones we continue to have to make, right? Like it's about solving for the inequities that we've allowed in our communities. And oftentimes words like local control and neighborhood character are our touch points because it stirs something deep in somebody to say that I'm losing control over something that is mine.

Sierra club has also been really active in talking about like what those words mean when it comes to land use, particularly around transit stations, the very communities that oftentimes have a significant investment, significant transit investments have purposefully ensured that no one could live here. And I think that's what we're trying to get at is like, how do you open up the doors towards these multi-billion dollar state assets that connect to the largest economy in north America with easy quick reliable transit service, but the nature of these stations, the access points themselves are deeply restricted.

They're deeply restricted to the point that I couldn't buy a property near that train station, if I wasn't a white male Christian in a number of these communities up until the passage of the fair housing act that they're still racially restricted land covenants on the books in some of these communities, like, I mean, what we're trying to open the door to this access point. And I think that's where the transit equity and transit access and responsibility comes into this.

It's like, how do we get more people able to take advantage and fully utilize this multi-billion dollar state investment? And I appreciate Sierra club's willingness to continuously focus us on that issue, access and equity you've been before us on the four, or your organization has been before the four prime issues on transportation this year. And I

always appreciate your consistency of how you speak to those issues. So thank you madam.

ANN GADWAH: Thank you, Representative.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thanks Representative of Lemar. I see that Representative Zawistowski has her hand raised.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for being here today, Ms. Gadwah, is that how you pronounce it?

ANN GADWAH: Yes, Gadwah.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Gadwah. Thank you for being here. I really appreciate your advocacy and on for just and equitable solutions, I've got a question for you. Affordable housing is a great thing. We need housing to be able to house our workforce. We should be able to have the people who work at our towns afford to live there.

Unfortunately the second section of this Bill actually does nothing for affordable housing, but that's beside the point it has to do with transit oriented development. It doesn't say anything about affordable housing. Would you agree Ms. Gadwah, that just and equitable solutions would also include lower taxes and lower utility Bills? You mentioned affordability.

ANN GADWAH: Yes. Yes. Well, of course, yes.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): I know that Representative Lemar has brought up the multi multimillion dollar infrastructure that's being put in at this point which will of course raise taxes. But would you think it's a safe assumption that if you have a new facility that would connect to other areas like New York city or wherever, I mean, it, maybe for you, it would connect to you know, to Hartford or Waterbury that an individual property owner would be

interested in making the most of the property that they currently own. Do you think that would be it, they would take advantage of it? They wouldn't just let it sit there. Do you think that's a safe assumption?

ANN GADWAH: Yeah, I would assume so. I mean, I'm not necessarily qualified to talk to all the, you know, all these -

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): No, appreciate I won't say -

ANN GADWAH: The points you're making, I mean, Sierra club is concerned with climate solutions and equitable access to public transportation.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Yeah. And I, you know, and I get it. Absolutely. I think it's great, but I think this particular Bill has a lot of overreach to it. And you've mentioned that affordable housing being a human right. How do you feel that that actually works together or against individual property rights?

ANN GADWAH: I think there's room in the conversation to be able to accommodate both those views. You know, I don't think it's an either or question

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Transit oriented development the proposal here really does take away personal property-- private property rights when it comes to what you can actually use your land for. I just have some serious concerns about that. But either way, you know, I appreciate a lot of things that you bring up. I absolutely support the importance of affordable housing. I just think that this Bill goes too far. Do you have any other comments that you'd like to make?

ANN GADWAH: No. I'm okay. We're okay. I thank you for your questions though.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Absolutely. And thank you very much for being here. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

ANN GADWAH: Thank you, Representative.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you so much, Representative. I don't see any other questions or comments Ms. Gadwah. I did just want to give you and the Sierra club one moment to respond to something we heard earlier in the hearing, and I'm not sure if you've been able to tune in all day, but there was one member of the public who testified that everybody in Connecticut ought to aspire to a yard and a swimming pool from a sustainability standpoint would the Sierra club have any concerns about that?

ANN GADWAH: I don't, I mean, yeah, I don't think that's, you know, an equitable solution to our issues. And I don't think that a yard and a swimming pool is sustainable for everybody in the long run. So, yeah.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Great. Probably falls outside of our Committee's cognizance and even the pertinent of the Bill today, but I just didn't want to give the Sierra club an opportunity to weigh in. I don't see any further questions. So thanks so much ma'am for your time today.

ANN GADWAH: Thank you. I appreciate everybody for their questions and opportunity to testify.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you. Next we'll hear from Erin McCleary.

ERIN MCCLEARY: Hello, can you hear me?

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Yes. Hi-

ERIN MCCLEARY: Excellent, good afternoon. Hello senators Cassano, Somers, Representatives Lamar,

Simms, Carney and Senator Haskell. Thank you for having me today. I'd like to thank you. I've spoken before on one of our public hearings earlier in January, so I appreciate the opportunity to do this again. I'm speaking specifically to the raised Senate Bill 982, with regard to modifications to the current DMV statutes. As you said, I'm Erin McCleary. I'm currently the immediate past president of the Connecticut Association of Optometrists and currently own and practice, I Clear Cries in eyecare in Plainville Connecticut.

First of all, I would like to applaud the Committee for continuing to support vision screening as a requirement for licensure. In addition, I wanted to voice my support for the amended language in sections 19 and 20 regarding how these vision screenings may be obtained. The newly revised language specifically add back e-vision screening assessment provided by DMV services or allows the applicant to obtain said vision screening verification from a medical professional.

Previous renditions remove the option of having an applicant obtain the needed vision screening from the DMV offered services, and instead required the vision assessment to be completed by a medical professional. This move would have had an impact on both drivers and physicians alike. First of all, licensed applicants would have carried the burden of obtaining the appropriate vision screening at a physician's office at a cost possibly not covered by their insurance.

Secondly, if a licensed applicant requested only a vision screening for DMV purposes, there became a question of medical and professional liability on the behalf of the medical professional. By amending the language to include actual vision screenings at the DMV or submitted vision assessment results from the medical professional, eye care providers are now able to provide the vision assessment requirements without concern over

liability. They may complete their comprehensive exams and submit the necessary data or the patient may obtain a simpler screening at the DMV.

In closing, I feel very strongly as an eye doctor in Connecticut. The vision assessment is truly needed prior to granting a vision, excuse me, a driver's license. I am immensely pleased that the Committee took my suggestions from back in January to heart and has amended the language to now allow either a free DMV screening or a visual assessment certification by the medical professional.

This gives back the benefit of choice the constituent and provides-- and providers can perform eye examinations without concern for liability. For those applicants concerned about COVID and who don't want to have potential increased exposure or risk at the DMV. They can choose to see their own professional healthcare professional of their choice.

In addition, this will help spread the number of vision screenings between the DMV as well as already busy doctor's offices. Ultimately, this is about safety of our Connecticut residents and this language ensures that licensed applicants have access to the rightfully required vision screening, but on their terms. So again, thank you for your thoughtful revisions. This language has my, and CEO, which is the Connecticut association about optometric full support of Senate Bill 982. Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thanks so much, Ms. McCleary. I'm sorry, is it Dr. McCleary?

ERIN MCCLEARY: Dr. McCleary, yes.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Dr. McCleary, thank you so much for your testimony today. One very quick question, and I apologize, I'm a little bit new to this. I am very new to the Committee and a little

bit behind on this section of the Bill. Is there a difference, a significant difference in the cost between this DMV screening and at a local doctor's office?

ERIN MCCLEARY: Well, that was part of the concern was that a vision screening is done as standard care at the DMV, right? So there's no really cost associated with that. If a patient or potentially a non-patient were to schedule an exam, they might say vision screening. There may not be a set screening fee for that. So depending on the doctor's office that you go to, you could be looking at anywhere from, you know, 180 up towards a high two hundreds, depending on the medical professional that you saw for a comprehensive exam, because they wouldn't want to offer just a brief eye exam, especially to a non-patient just to simply do a vision screening because there's potential that you could miss other ocular conditions. So, I mean, they most likely would have done a full comprehensive exam anyway.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Understood. Well, thanks so much Dr. McCleary for your testimony. I don't see any questions or comments from Committee members, but I look forward to continuing to work with you and your organization on this Bill.

ERIN MCCLEARY: All right. Thank you so much for your time.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Okay. Next we will hear from Stephen Ranieri. I apologize if I mispronounced your last name, sir.

STEPHEN RANIERI: No, you are, you are good. So Senator Haskell Senator Cassano, Representative Lemar, Senator Somers, Representative Carney, and the honorable members of the Transportation Committee on behalf of enterprise holdings, I am pleased to submit written testimony on HB 6568 an act concerning peer-to-peer car sharing programs.

So my name is Stephen Ranieri and I am the controller for CAMRAC LLC, which is the wholly owned subsidiary of enterprise holdings, which operates our brands, national car rental, enterprise car rental, and Alamo car rental across the state of Connecticut. Our regional headquarters in my office is in Windsor Locks, Connecticut.

So we greatly appreciate the Committee raising HB 6568, this legislative session and support the general insurance framework that appears to-- that it appears has been largely adopted from the national council of insurance legislators, also known as NCOIL, the model Bill. So we would ask that the scope section from the adopted NCOIL model Bill be added to the current Bill language without this section, the newly defined peer to peer car sharing newly defined peer to peer car sharing activity could be interpreted to be exempt from the taxes and fees associated with the service of renting or sharing a vehicle.

We would also request that the language governing the airport activity in section 13, be deleted and replaced with revised language included in my written statement. The revised language provides the appropriate protections for the Connecticut airport authority to engage in agreements and collect fees from peer to peer programs.

So our enterprise is a 62 year old family owned family operated entity that offers mobility solutions, including car rental, car sharing, commuter van pooling, and other multi-- I'm sorry, multi mobility service models. For more than six decades, our enterprise has been sharing our fleet of vehicles with consumers. Here in Connecticut, we accomplished that with 620 employees operating a fleet of 10,000 vehicles through a network of 68 locations, whether you brand a car rental or car sharing, it's the exact same service being provided to consumers. Only the business models for providing the service are different.

I sat in front of you last year and I said, if it walks like a duck talks like a duck, and it looks like a duck, chances are, it's probably a duck. And I realized that in this age of virtual meetings that hopefully the internet didn't skip out and the word duck came out as intended. But anyways so in many ways, this is the Air P&P of car rental vehicle owners make their cars available for rent through a peer-to-peer program. Consumers then rent the vehicles from the program and the program pays the vehicle owner a portion of the proceeds and retains the rest for themselves.

Companies doing business as peer-to-peer car sharing programs assert that they aren't in the business of renting cars. And as a result do not follow Connecticut's laws for their rental of vehicles to the public, nor do they collect and remit the taxes fees, and fees that Connecticut as deemed applicable to rental car transactions, enterprise remits, a variety of taxes annually to the Department of Revenue in Connecticut, remitting over 10 million in sales tax, and 1.5 million tourism taxes annually.

So in summary, our enterprise supports Martinizing Connecticut's laws, existing laws to ensure that there are no barriers to rent a car to rent or privately ran a peer to peer car renting company. While also ensuring that our residents are getting the same consumer protections, regardless of what company they used to rent a car, which includes a properly maintained and sanitized vehicle.

Our airports have the express authority to regulate this rental activity at their airports and the already enacted taxes and fees owed on car rental activity don't go uncollected. So thank you for your time and consideration on this very important issue. Enterprise respectfully requests that you add scope language to the Bill and replace the language in section 13, with the language we provided today in my submitted testimony, enterprise looks forward to

working with the Transportation Committee to ensure Connecticut consumers are protected. Robust competition is fostered and important revenue streams are maintained. Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you so much, sir, for your testimony. I think I have some questions, but first I will turn to Representative Meskers followed by Representative Carney.

REP. MESKERS (150TH): Luckily I'm prepared and he didn't catch me off guard. Thank you, Senator Haskell and our chair. So the statements you made let me start with the background today. I was sitting concomitantly with two Committees with Transportation, Bonding Revenue and Finance, and Bonding, Revenue and Finance. One Representative Cheeseman, I believe was presenting or introducing legislation regarding Google and Facebook and taxation.

So here, I want to back you up on your statement and commentary. You referenced about eleven and a half million dollars in taxes between the tourism tax and I guess the sales tax on your enterprise that you're paying into Connecticut essentially, or the users of the enterprise cars, right?

STEPHEN RANIERI: That is correct.

REP. MESKERS (150TH): And from the industry, do you have an estimate of where you stand vis-a-vis these internet providers and what kind of competition or market share you think they're at? Have you guys looked at that and thought?

STEPHEN RANIERI: I have some pretty COVID numbers and there were more than a hundred vehicles that were made available in the state for this car sharing platform. But unfortunately I have not, I don't know currently. I mean, I could probably do a quick Google search for the few companies that I know of, but I couldn't speak to how much.

REP. MESKERS (150TH): But if you were looking at so numbers of cars of yours versus theirs, you were at a magnitude of where more or less than cars?

STEPHEN RANIERI: Yes, we have 10,000 vehicles in the state. I couldn't speak to how many they have.

REP. MESKERS (150TH): So they might have a thousand or 2000 cars you were thinking potentially. So, I mean, I'm just trying to get the magnitude of the loss of revenue, because if you're paying us 11 and a half and the activity levels are similar and they're at a thousand cars versus 6,000, that's still, you know, that's a \$2 million of overall revenue stream that the state is losing from businesses that are not being captured by taxation, as well as they're putting you I guess at a competitive disadvantage, the income may not be recorded. They may not be paying income tax, et cetera, versus the employees at your shops.

So the overall losses is a combination sales tax revenue you said 11 and a half plus, you know, if your activity comes down, you'll look, some of your employees go well, you'll have to shrink the footprint of your business and we'll lose income tax on those salaries.

So I guess capturing this income is very important to me and should be important to all of us because, you know, giving them a competitive advantage solely on taxes is not in the interest of the state. And certainly not in the interest of the other residents, because we all have to bear the burden if they're not paying their fair share. So I want to thank you for the testimony. I'll look closely at what the amendments on the airports, et cetera, because I was approached, I believe last session and with the concerns from the various rental companies on these internet competitors. So I want to make sure we've got the language, right. So thank you very much for your testimony.

STEPHEN RANIERI: Thank you, Representative.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thanks, Representative Meskers. Representative Carney.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Steve, for coming here today. This is obviously a new issue for me with the peer-to-peer car sharing coming into Connecticut. So, I had spoken with them and I know I've spoken with you in the past about this issue. So in your recommended I guess changes to that section regarding airports is any of that from that model legislation at all?

STEPHEN RANIERI: So the original draft that we had submitted did have the language that we were looking for, but the one that was put out after the fact it looks a little bit different. So

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Is the Language you recommended has that been used in other states as well?

STEPHEN RANIERI: I believe so, yes.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Okay. Because it seemed, I think in your testimony, you said that the language we had has been similar language to that has been used and it hasn't been effective.

STEPHEN RANIERI: Correct. Yes. This is a new topic, I think, you know, even though these companies have been around for a while you know, as states sort of go through and pass legislation on it we feel as though, you know, some states maybe wish they had done it a little bit different. I know Maryland comes to mind with that. But you know, so I guess to answer your question yeah, we, we would be looking for that NCOIL model language that we submitted at first.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Okay. All right. I appreciate that. And I, you know, I know the Committee, I know

I want to get something done this session. That'll kind of cover everything with this new industry. So I appreciate you providing some suggestions for that language that hopefully will pass something before the session is up. So thanks again, Steve.

STEPHEN RANIERI: Yes. Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you very much, Representative Carney. Representative Meskers, I think your hand may still be raised unless it's a follow up question. It doesn't appear that way. Steve, thanks for your testimony. Looking forward to digging into your eye written comments as well and reaching a consensus on this important issue.

STEPHEN RANIERI: Okay. Thank you everyone. Appreciate it.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Of course. Have a great day. Next we'll hear from Eric George. Good afternoon, Mr. George.

ERIC GEORGE: Good afternoon. Thank you, Senator Haskell, Representative Lemar, Senator Somers, Representative Carney and members of the Transportation Committee. I'm Eric George. I'm the president of the insurance association of Connecticut. And I'm here to offer comments on house Bill 6568, the peer-to-peer Bill. I know there are varying aspects of this Bill just for the Committee's edification. We are solely concerned with the insurance components of house Bill 6568.

We do ask this Committee to amend the Bill that you have before you in its current form, so that it is in alignment in accordance with the NCOIL model act, as well as the amendments that are about to be adopted to the NCOIL model act. You can refer to my written testimony if you like for an explanation of the end coil model act and those amendments just by way of background NCOIL is the National Conference of Insurance Legislators and this National

Organization of Insurance Legislators adopts model acts from time to time.

These model acts help create commonality and regulation for various important areas. And the emergence of P-to-P has definitely become one of those important areas. I'm going to talk a little later about transportation network companies, because there's a lot of analogy there, but just for everybody's knowledge, what's going on in NCOIL, Representative Bart Roland, who is from Kentucky is the chief sponsor of the P-to-P initiative at NCOIL. And he has agreed to the amendments that I refer to. So it is apparent that the passage of those amendment to the model act is highly likely and will happen soon.

The model act and those amendments represent the national agreement between the auto insurance industry and the peer-to-peer industry. We would have problems with, we would oppose house Bill 6568 without the adoption of those amendments and going to the NCOIL because these insurance regulatory systems of P-to-P industry they're extremely nuanced and we support systems following that national model that was agreed to by the parties as I referred to before, this is analogous to TNCs for everybody's reminding TNCs are Uber and Lyft for lack of a better term.

And some years ago, when the popularity of using these ride sharing companies was coming about the insurance aspects of these ride sharing companies were critical and a national agreement was reached in that instance, just like it has been done here in the P-to-P. As a matter of fact, the rules for ensuring peer to peer is clearer than it was for TNCs. This is actually a smoother road.

So as I understand it from all parties and I was, I'm very happy to have heard the speaker before me, there doesn't appear to be any disagreement about the insurance components to those components that

there might be disagreements amongst parties. Again, that's not something that we're offering comment on, but those are my spoken comments. You have my written comments, which go much farther. We did jointly file those with the APCIA. So I'd like to thank you for your time, and I'm here to answer any questions that you have.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you very much, Mr. George, I look forward to digging into that written testimony. This is obviously a complex issue and looking forward to learning more. I see Representative Lemar who will be followed by Representative Carney.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Mr. Eric, you're exactly right. We had intended to model the NCOIL language and the other added language that existed on this issue. And we're working closely both with representation from enterprise language that was submitted by the P-to-P companies themselves. And we are trying to do a best practice version of this.

And I greatly appreciate your willingness to engage on this issue particularly if we can be ahead of the movement in the amendment. So your willingness to share with us those amendments, those proposed amendments to give us an idea of where model language may be going in the next year or two, we ensure that when we hopefully pass this by the end of session we are where we need to be. We don't have to revisit this immediately after passage next year. So, I greatly appreciate your willingness to work with us on it. And I look forward to seeing you at that moment.

ERIC GOERGE: Thank you, representing Lemar. And in addition to our testimony, we can provide you with any other background documentations that you require.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you. And it's, as you know, this has been a few years you've been working

with some of the folks who try to get us to this point. So hopefully when we do pass it, it's not that 2019 version that we're passing, but instead of 2021 best practice.

ERIC GOERGE: Exactly.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thanks, Representative Lemar. Representative Carney followed by Representative O'Dea.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I think I had the same idea as chairman Lemar. So Eric, thanks for testifying. So do you know I guess two things you said these amendments will probably gain widespread support soon. Do you have any idea when they're actually going to take action on that?

ERIC GOERGE: So they were laid out in February early February and I have to say that I will have to find out what their schedule is. I can find that out relatively easily but I need to find out what their schedule is for the Kentucky Representative to offer those amendments and have them adopted to the model act.

I understand the pertinent and the critical nature of that. So we will follow up and I will follow up with you about what the timing of that looks like. It is my understanding that to say that the skids have been greased is, is the, probably the term that I've heard the most about this, that it's not a matter of if it's a matter of when.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Okay. And has there been any pushback to those proposed amendments at all?

ERIC GOERGE: Not on the insurance pieces that I'm aware of at all. Again, if there are components of disagreement, they're not components that I am engaged on.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Okay. Well, I appreciate that, Eric. I appreciate the testimony and I agree with chairman Lemar. I'd like to pass something that's as up-to-date as possible. So we don't have to come back next year and do this all over again. So thank you very much for that.

ERIC GOERGE: Thank you, Representative Carney.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thanks Representative. Next will be Representative Tom O'Dea.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. And thank you, Mr. George, for testimony. Representative Carney kind of went over this and you had said it earlier, as I understand looking at your testimony, there's nobody in disputing or disagreeing with any of the testimony you all have submitted. Correct? In other words -

ERIC GOERGE: That is my understanding, sir. Yes.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): There's consensus to what you're saying there. So, that's great. I just wanted to confirm that and ask that you keep us updated if you hear of anything, but appreciate your advocacy. And unfortunately we don't get to see up in the Capitol building and like we usually do, but please do keep us apprised. I value your input and thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ERIC GOERGE: I appreciate that. Once we get shots in the arm once you open up the doors, I'll be back there right away.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): All right I don't see any questions or comments. I'm hearing a little bit of feedback from one of your members. Hung on, there we go. Thank you so much for your time and for your testimony, Mr. George it makes our job so much easier when folks come forward with an amendment that is universally agreed upon. So I thank you for that.

ERIC GOERGE: Thank you, sir.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): All right, next, we will move to Father Romans.

JEFFREY ROMANS: Thank you Mr. Chairman and Ranking members of the Committee, as well as members of the Transportation Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to address you. My name is Father Jeffrey Romans. I'm the pastor of St. Bridget of Sweden parish in Cheshire with some 3000 plus families. And I've been privileged to serve there for the past six years, but I also serve as the priest director of St. Bridget school, which has just over 300 students from 200 plus families.

I'm writing in speaking to you today to request your support for Senate Bill number 608, to enact safety protocols concerning the use and operation of ice cream trucks and frozen dessert vending trucks. On June 12th of this past year, our school and parish family experienced a tragic loss when one of our students very young life Tristin Barhorst aged 10 suddenly came to an end after a tragic incident involving an ice cream truck and another vehicle on west road here in Cheshire.

What was to be the last day of school normally a time of joy in an incident became a horrible experience for many of us. I was not at the scene at the time, but was contacted by the police chief and notified of what had happened and that a number of my students were present and witnessed that horrific event. I immediately responded to the scene to be with those that witnessed this tragic incident. And then rode down to the hospital in new Haven to simply be with Tristin's family.

You see, they are my personal friends, as well as my parishioners. And this loss was real for me as well. The Barhorst, family lost their son and brother, my parish and my school family lost not only a member

of our community, but a dear friend to so many, a smile that truly illuminated our halls each day.

As we continue to work through this tremendous loss and the pain associated with it, and to do our best to honor Tristin's memory while we continue on each day without his smile and presence among us, I implore you the members of the Transportation Committee to act and pass this legislation, Senate Bill number 608. So no other community ever has to experience the horrific event that we did in the future.

This is not a political issue. This is not a party issue. This is common sense legislation that could save communities from experienced tragic losses in the future. Children are our future, and I trust you will do the right thing and vote to do all you can to ensure their safety and to reduce the risk of another community and another family from having to endure the pain, our community and Tristin's family have had to endure this past year.

Please vote Senate Bill 6, 0 8 into law, and please name this Bill Tristin's law in honor of our friend and amazing and incredible young soul. Thank you for this opportunity to address you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you father, for being with us today and for all that you've done for your community in the wake of this terrible tragedy. I want to echo all that I've said earlier today. And other members of the Committee have said, but many of us are very dedicated to getting this Bill across the finish line. And we appreciate you taking the time to be with us. I see that Representative O'Dea has his hand raised.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to say thank you father Romans for your testimony and for your service to your parishioners in getting through, into the family for helping them through such a tragic time. And I promise to try and

work with my colleagues and getting this across and named after Tristin. Thank you.

JEFFREY ROMANS: Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Representative Zupkus.

REP. ZUPKUS (89TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I too, just wanted to say thank you, father Romans. It is nice to see you. I hate that it's because of this. But thank you for coming up and thank you for serving all of Cheshire and everybody because we need you especially in times like this. So thank you.

JEFFREY ROMANS: Thank you, Representative. It's good to know. We have a friend up there.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Father, I don't see any additional questions or comments from Committee members, but we are really grateful for your time today.

JEFFREY ROMANS: Thank you again, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Have a great day. We will now move to Senator Cicarella. Are you here, Senator?

SENATOR CICARELLA (34TH): I am. Thank you, Vice chair Haskell. Thank you, Chair Lemar and vice chair Simms as well as Ranking members, Carney and Somers. I'm speaking today in favor of Senate Bill 608. My honor and, greatly privileged to put this forward this common sense legislation. Unfortunately I was unable to get logged in due to some connective activity issues. But I was able to watch the testimony on YouTube and I was able to see Tristin's family and friends speak just like father Roman in favor of such a common sense Bill to protect our children.

And it was also a great honor when I reached out to other Representatives and senators on both sides and explained to them not only Tristin's story but other stories that I've experienced while being an investigator. One was on Ellen street in Hamden also where a young child was struck by a car and that truck ice cream truck also had the safety features that were just not being used. And this is not an isolated incident. There was also a few other incidents in Connecticut last year.

When doing the research for the case out of Hamden? It blew my mind to realize that there was no legislation or anything to protect, not only the children and the ice cream truck patrons, but the other cars driving in those areas, as well as these ice cream truck owners who operate these businesses. And I truly believe with this bipartisan support that we will be able to push this forward in Tristin's name.

I do know some people had some questions I noticed on YouTube. If anybody has any questions for me, I'd love to answer them. And I also did submit written testimony as well. Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Senator. Appreciate you circling back and apologies for any connectivity issues this morning, but we are grateful for your testimony. I don't see any questions or comments from my colleagues, but have a great rest of your day.

SENATOR CICARELLA (34TH): Thank you very much.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Next, we'll hear from James Feehan. Are you with us, sir?

JAMES FEEHAN: I think you have me now, Senator.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Yes, I can hear you now go right ahead.

JAMES FEEHAN: Sorry, I dropped out somehow. Thank you, sir. Senator Haskell, thank you very much for allowing me to address your Committee, the members of the Transportation Committee, Mr. Chairman, my name is Jim Feehan, president Northing End Fire Equipment and Apparatus. My firefighter, both professional and volunteer actually from I believe down your way, sir. I don't know if you're covered, you're covered Stanford district, sir, or you're close to it.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): I don't, but close by.

JAMES FEEHAN: Yes, sir. Thank you. As I said, I'm a 35 year firefighter. I'm also been involved in the sales and service of fire apparatus since 1986, I'm rising and support today for a Senate Bill 982 section 26. I'm also in favor of house Bill 5428 982 and 5428 are addressing, is that I believe that we're putting a firefighter lives in jeopardy and all of our first responders.

Currently we have unlicensed persons and business entities selling new and used emergency apparatus in Connecticut without proper licensure emergency vehicles being that fire apparatus and ambulances. Furthermore, we have these unlicensed persons and entities repairing these apparatus as well. It's interesting to know that we disbarred the Tesla corporation from selling automobiles in Connecticut. Yet we failed to apply the same standards in regards to the sale fire apparatus for some reason. Over the years, our regulators in the state have either refused or ignored the issue for some unknown reason of addressing selling to this very small market segment.

However, this licensing or lack of licensing, if you would affect every towns, because we all have fire apparatus and we all have ambulances in every town. We need our DMV and our regulators to ensure that the state statute on automobiles sales applied to car and truck dealerships that we normally ask for

when an individual goes to buy a car, we applied to the segment of this, of the order, excuse me, the auto industry as well.

These rogue unlicensed entities and persons are violating numerous state statutes or lemon laws or state safety requirements, trading laws, titling of the most simplest things. Individuals are not offering proper odometer statements under federal law. Our laws on warranty and insurance coverage, workers' comp as well as a required state payments for these licenses and the ability to operate.

The study that's being requested under SB 82 assuming 982, I believe should be passed, but I also think that you should consider ordering putting some other language in there. The first is to identify all persons and manufacturers and dealers, selling fire apparatus in Connecticut.

The second is then identify all that are properly licensed to do that in Connecticut. You'll actually find that between 75 and 80% do not have proper licensure. I'd also suggest respectfully that we put in this study that we look at who's repairing fire apparatus in ambulances. And then again, answer asked a similar question. Do they have proper licensure?

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I asked the members, you know, is how much has one first respond to life worth. We need to ensure that the businesses that are selling fire apparatus in our state, that they adhere to our rules and by the same token, protect our first responders and make sure that this, when they get the apparatus that has been sold through a proper firm that is licensed. Thank you, sir. And I'm here to answer any questions.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Well, thank you very much for your testimony, sir. Thank you for your service to the Stamford area. I see that Representative Carney has his hand raised. Representative.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Jim, for coming on today. You have a lot of friends in the legislature. Cause I think I heard from about three or four of my colleagues about this issue. So I'm glad we're able to finally talk about it. Cause I know it created a lot of conversation amongst myself and the chairs and nonpartisan staff about what's going on. So if you go, can you just explain a little about how one becomes licensed to sell or repair an emergency apparatus?

JAMES FEEHAN: It's a very lengthy process Representative. And I think that's why there's curtailing or skirting of our laws going on. In our firm's case you have to go to your local zoning boards. You have to get property that is licensed or if you would zone properly to do that type of service, then from there, you need to, after that's approved, you have to go through the DMV has a very stringent as well as particular things that have to be met after meeting all those items, you then have to pass certain tests, insurance requirements, as well as have certified mechanics. And then after all that, you have to pass an onsite inspection at any point, should you not meet something, they do allow you to fix those items, but it is a very rigorous process to go through.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Okay. So, I mean, are there any like particular, I guess when there's somebody that's not licensed to sell, are they I mean, are they coming from, are they selling from another state? Are they actually selling from Connecticut and just not going through this licensing process, despite that fact? So I'm just trying to figure out who these bad actors really are.

JAMES FEEHAN: Both, sir, you hit the nail on the head with both, but you know, other states have other requirements, but the state of Connecticut is pretty specific. And which I bring up earlier, which

I mentioned was the Tesla corporation and Tesla has a very distinct model. And the Tesla model, the, you have to have a bonafide brick and mortar facility to be able to sell automobiles in the state of Connecticut.

Some of these bad actors are using things such as, well, I'm only a manufacturer's Representative. We have entities working out of their homes out of places that are not properly registered and the Tesla model should really be applied to them. Unfortunately, in the past, when we've reached out to the DMV they have said, oh, this is something that for us is how did they put it? It wasn't covered. And then other times we've got an opinion that yes, it is covered.

So the discussion has been, let's apply the Tesla model to everybody and be consistent if you're going to sell any type of new apparatus, or if you would automobile in the state of Connecticut, it should be properly sold for properly licensed dealer.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Yeah. That's one of the issues we were kind of dealing with in our conversations about this legislation. It seemed like there were, or we've been told that there are laws on the books, but it's possible DMVs just not enforcing them, or they're not enforcing them to the full extent that could be. I don't know if, what your thoughts are on that?

JAMES FEEHAN: Well, sir, I have a letter we applied 10 years ago to bring this problem up to DMV and they issued a letter stating that a fire apparatus were exempt that it was under Connecticut state statute, but we were unable to support that claim. Then later on another letter came and said, Hey, you should have our proper license to be able to sell a fire apparatus and ambulances, in Connecticut.

So the-- you know, kind of depends on what administration I think was working at the time. My

fear here is for the members of the Committee, if you recall, a number of years ago you know, the tragedy that happened in Waterbury I don't want to see another one of those occur. When you have-- we protect the public by making sure that our dealerships will selling servicing automobiles, have a license for a reason. I don't know why we don't do the same here. It's a very simple code change, but I think it's right to protect our first responders.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Yeah. I agree with you. And I think this, you know, certainly this issue needs, if not for legislation, definitely some conversations with the DMV to try to figure this problem out or to have them enforce it. So you know, any other information you can provide the Committee will be really helpful because this is, I know this is a new issue for me. I think it was a new issue for the chairs and my fellow Ranking member as well. So, you know, any help you can meet us to try to move this in the right direction and get the you know, and make sure this things change for the better in this regard would be very helpful.

JAMES FEEHAN: That's our goal as well.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Thank you very much, Jim.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Jim. I don't see any questions or comments, any additional questions or comments or Committee members so grateful for your time, and I hope you have a great rest of your day.

JAMES FEEHAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, thank you members.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Okay. Next we will move to Gaston Kelly. Are you with us, Mr. Kelly?

GASTON KELLY: I am here. Can you hear me okay?

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Yes. Go right ahead.

GASTON KELLY: Beautiful. Okay. Chair Haskell, chair Lemar and distinguished members of the Transportation Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide our perspective on house Bill 6568. My name is Gaston Kelly. I am the public policy manager for Getaround and we are a connected in contact list, car sharing marketplace.

Mr. George did an excellent job covering the insurance piece and we share the position that the Bill would greatly benefit from adopting the latest and greatest from NCOIL. So I will instead use my testimony to talk a little bit more generally about car sharing and some of the benefits of this innovative model.

So at Getaround we use technology, a device, we call it the Getaround connect, which is installed in the car and a smartphone app to power a marketplace that can help people share a car with others nearby without ever having to meet up or exchange keys. We were in the process of launching in Connecticut. We're excited of growing our operates in the state, but we are not there in full force yet.

Our platform helps car owners monetize this obviously very expensive asset on average that sits idle 22 hours a day. And the extra money obviously means a lot especially during times like these of course not everybody can afford to own a car or even aspire to own one and that's okay.

Through our platform, people can get access to a car when they need one by the hour or the day. We strongly believe that for some trips, for some task a car is really the best option. Our technology that Getaround connected, as I mentioned, is compatible with over 3000 maker models that are already on the street.

So we partner with small local businesses to get those devices installed. And we certainly enjoyed

becoming part of the community that way and helping to facilitate some of that economic activity. In short, we can turn any car into a connected car. I did want to point out, and this is very important. We do not own any cars. We simply connect people who own the cars with people who need them.

Where we operate car sharing quickly becomes an important piece of the transportation option puzzle. When citizens are empowered to share their cars, transportation deserts can disappear overnight and they're replaced by a locally sourced option, which we feel very strongly about.

One key point that I wanted to share is 90% of the people that use our platform, where we operate are locals. These are local people making local trips. So last piece I'll share with everybody here is car sharing has environmental benefits. Studies show that car share-- that sharing one car can take 10 off the road. That means fewer accidents reduce traffic in cleaner air.

So we very much appreciate the Bill because it creates a regulatory structure, specifically tailored for a peer to peer car sharing business model. And as I mentioned, we're looking forward to working together on this Bill as it progresses. And again, I'm happy to answer any questions and thank you very much for the time.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thanks so much Mr. Kelly, for your testimony and glad to hear that you're in support of the NCOIL amendments and perhaps forthcoming legislative language that we heard about earlier for Mr. George.

One quick follow up question. You mentioned that the vast majority of these trips are local in nature. The ones do travel out of state is the legislation that is under consideration in Connecticut with the amendments that you've suggested. Would that be in keeping with most of our neighboring states?

Obviously we would want somewhat analogous legislation if folks are going to be using this to travel out of state.

GASTON KELLY: Yeah, absolutely. I think that's one of the key benefits of the NCOIL model, which is soon to be updated. That Bill has been considered by so many states last session, even COVID shortened, and it's already being considered by 2036 this year.

So for us as a startup growing company, we really need we've benefited from the consistent regulatory structure that can allow us to operate and protects consumers on both sides of the marketplace. So directly around Connecticut, there hasn't been a ton of activity so that everybody's aligned, but there is a lot of progress in each of the states. Absolutely.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Fantastic. Thanks so much, Mr. Kelly. I don't see questions or comments from my colleagues today, but I will certainly be in touch as we work on this legislation.

GASTON KELLY: And very much appreciate the time. Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Have a great day rest of your day. Next we will hear from Sean Ghio. I apologize if I mispronounced your last name, sir.

SEAN GHIO: Thank you Senator Haskell, you did not. My first name is Sean, however not Steve. But it's just fine. Nice to see you. Thank you, Senator Haskell, Representative Lemar, Representative Carney, Senator Somers, if you're on the call, I I'm sorry, I can't see everyone, members of the Committee. My name is Sean Ghio. I'm the policy director at the partnership for strong communities we're a statewide non-profit advocacy organization dedicated to ending homelessness and expanding housing opportunities in Connecticut.

We serve as the organizer of the home Connecticut campaign since 2004. we're a diverse home Connecticut campaign say diverse group of stakeholders interested in expanding housing opportunity to state from legal services, developers, local municipal officials and everyone in between. And I'm here to testify and supportive HB 6570, which touches on a couple of the elements of the home Connecticut campaigns legislative priorities this year, namely permitting accessory apartments and multi-family housing near transit.

And I'd just like to speak quickly on that. Permitting accessory dwelling units and small multi-family housing more broadly. And without undue restrictions will allow for an incremental growth of our lower cost housing supply, but it's not the entire solution to our affordable housing crisis. These are just two small tools that we're going to need and a larger toolbox.

Connecticut actually has committed a lot of resources over the last decade to expand and affordable housing across the state really meant hundreds of millions of dollars. And, but that also is not the entire story. And we live in a state where about half of renters spending on an affordable amount of their income on housing, about 200,000 households spend at least half of their income on housing. So there is really no silver bullet, and I think you'll often hear people criticize individual prescriptions to try to improve the housing environment in Connecticut, criticize it for not solving the problem that it because is a very complex issue.

So as I mentioned the expanding ADU and small multi-family near transit, it really makes a lot of sense because you're doing it in a place where there's already the infrastructure in place. We have the transit station, our transit stations typically are an areas of community where there is the most development and, and you are less likely to have to

extend infrastructure such as water, sewer supply even the road network.

And again, it's a way of expanding lower cost. Housing, accessory dwelling apartments are a great naturally lower cost way of constructing for individual property owners to make the decision about what they want to do on their property with whether it's a separate structure that can fit on their land, or whether it's dividing up their single family home to allow for a small apartment within it.

These are things we see are very common in other parts of the country, and we'd like to see allow it just more broadly in Connecticut, to allow the market to construct a lot of this lower cost housing. That's really, you haven't seen a lot of for generations. Now, many of us are probably familiar either ourselves or with our families of having grown up or at least been in small multifamily homes, 2, 3, 4 family homes. And if you have you probably, they are old. And there's a reason for that. They haven't been permitted and most local zoning ordinances for many, many years.

There's also of course, desire for many people. And my parents through one of them to live in single family homes, nothing that this Bill or any really any other proposals I've seen does anything to say that that's not going to continue to be within anyone's right to maintain their single family home.

What this Bill would say is if I want to create an accessory dwelling apartment, a small apartment on my single family home, that I should be able to do that. It's really a protection of private rights, not an infringement. And I would just wrap up by saying the section of the Bill that deals with exploring TOD on state owned land, on parking lots at transit stations. This is something that I've seen. We have examples of this across the country. It makes a lot of sense if this is a state resource,

the land, and it's leveraging a state resource in public transit.

As, I mean, I just want to reinforce as Representative Lemar said earlier about, we need to expand the accessibility of this tremendous resource to tremendous job creation. That is our transit network in Connecticut and expand on the network itself. But this is a small step to allowing an equitable step to allowing some development right near to stations, the requirement of 20% of the units to be affordable mitigates against potential displacement in our cities. And it allows access to a greater range of towns for a lot of lower and middle income families in the states. So I really do support it. And I'm happy to answer any questions you might have.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you very, very much, Sean, for your testimony and for your perspective. I see at least one of my colleagues has his hand raised, but I will beg his indulgence and ask a quick question if that's okay.

You mentioned that in other states state on land has been leveraged to create more affordable housing opportunities. I wondered if you could provide the Committee with some examples of what that has looked like elsewhere, but also provide your perspective as to whether or not you think this ought to be limited only to parking lots near train stations, or also perhaps other state-owned land along bus routes.

And in my community, for example, some feedback that I often receive about Bills of this nature is that, well, some folks who might qualify for affordable housing actually don't rely on the train as their method of public transport. They rely on the bus line, perhaps that's another area for exploration in this Bill, but I just wanted to get your perspective on that.

SEAN GHIO: Absolutely. And I think the Bill does mention bus rapid transit. So that would be the connecting of fast tracks stations. But you're right. You know, our rail system is largely a commuter rail system and lower income families definitely the, I think you know, DOT could verify this transportation by bus is, is critical.

So is absolutely I think you're right state lands that are adjacent to great bus infrastructure? That makes a lot of sense too. I think as for examples, as far as examples, the one that comes instantly to mind is the bay area the Bas system which some of us I'm familiar with if you've been out there Bart owns a lot of its own land on Connecticut. It's my understanding the Metro north itself doesn't own land in Connecticut.

But the Bart system does own a lot of land and they've taken steps to put out proposals for, to see just as this Bill requests for information from developers and others to see what's feasible in these town of lands, they've done this on Bart. I'm not sure if anything's been developed yet, but Bart is a much bigger network than I think we have in Connecticut, of course.

But I do think the bus systems, as you mentioned the bus systems are a really critical and it's not necessarily what am I trying to say? That the increasing density, where we already have existing systems in place transit systems in place, it's a virtuous cycle, because if you put more riders where there's already service, then you'll have more demand for that service. And so anyway, I hope I answered your question.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): You did, sir. Thank you very much. I appreciate that and look forward to following up on some of what's happening in California to learn more. I see the Representative O'Dea has his hand raised.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, Mr. Ghio, for your testimony. I see that you were a local planner in Cape Cod what town was that?

SEAN GHIO: A variety of towns, most of it was in Barnstable. I worked as downtown planner, primarily in Hyannis, which was part of the town of Barnstable.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Does Massachusetts have a similar law to what's being proposed, you know, what this legislation is you know?

SEAN GHIO: Massachusetts just recently passed-- no I haven't been a planner in Massachusetts for many years. So any information I have is from reading the newspaper or online, I should say. So Massachusetts has recently passed some zoning reforms particularly around transit stations. And I cannot speak to the specifics of it, but this has just recently happened, signed into law by governor Baker within the last few months.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): My understanding is that the Cape does not have any as of right development on the Cape, or at least I haven't seen any, are you aware of any as of right developmental -

SEAN GHIO: As of right, what type of development? Of any type?

REP. O'DEA (125TH): What's the, as of the type that we're looking at here today?

SEAN GHIO: Well, I haven't, as again, I have been a planner in Hyannis for 20 years, but I can tell you there's plenty as of right development. If you're speaking about the town of Barnstable really single family zoning being the most obvious one you know, but in the center of Hyannis, which is, does have transit of a variety of choices, including a ferry there's a whole host of permitted uses that have

administrative approval, including a lot of commercial uses did not require going in front of what they call the planning board.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): But they do require local review and approval. Correct?

SEAN GHIO: That's right. That was part of my job as the planner to reviews commercial plans and things like that.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): And your job as a policy director for partnership for strong communities, part of your job is to engage in increase affordable housing in Connecticut, correct?

SEAN GHIO: Yes. That's part of our mission.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): And did you have any role in drafting this legislation?

SEAN GHIO: None whatsoever.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): And you live in Cheshire obviously would you agree with me that Cheshire residents are better off determining what's good and appropriate for Cheshire than New Canaan residents or what's good and appropriate for Cheshire?

SEAN GHIO: Well, it depends on what you're talking about. Cheshire residents told you that only white people should be allowed in this town, I would say no.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Okay. Well, when was the last time that has happened that you know?

SEAN GHIO: I don't know. My point is I'm not here representing the town of Cheshire and I'm here representing the partnership for strong communities in our positions. I'm not sure what my fellow residents of Cheshire's views on anything have to do with any or my views of their views, I suppose.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Well, I will tell you a majority of the people I believe in this Committee do believe in local control. And would you agree with me that this Bill takes away some local control?

SEAN GHIO: No. It depends on what you mean by local control. Do you mean the sometimes unelected members of the planning and zoning commission, or do you mean private property owners? Because when I read this Bill, it actually expands, as I mentioned in my testimony, it expands the ability of private property owners, like myself in Cheshire, and my neighbors to do more with our property than we're permitted to do now by people that are not the private property owners of my land in Cheshire. So I'm not quite sure what you mean by local control.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): What's your understanding of the word local control?

SEAN GHIO: I just gave it to you.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Okay. So you would agree that to be on a planning and zoning Committee in New Canaan, I don't know about Cheshire, but you're supposed to be a resident. Is that true in Cheshire?

SEAN GHIO: Presumably I don't serve on the planning commission here.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Okay. So the planning and zoning commission in New Canaan, and as I understand, Cheshire are local residents. Is that your understanding?

SEAN GHIO: To my understanding, yes.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Okay. So when I say local control, I'm using it in the same way you do. Now, you would agree with me that Tom O'Dea a private

residents shouldn't be allowed to build a nuclear power plant on his property.

SEAN GHIO: Sure. If you want to talk about have straw man arguments, I'm happy to do that.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Okay. So, we're in agreement that there should be some restrictions to somebody ability to build on their property and in the community should have some right in that, correct?

SEAN GHIO: Yes. Section 8-2, the state's general statutes controls land use, and delegates a large amount of that authority specifically to the towns.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): And part of this Bill prevents some of that delegation. Would you agree with that?

SEAN GHIO: No. It modifies it.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Modify? How does it modify it?

SEAN GHIO: I'm not sure how it prevents the delegation that law has been modified many times over the years. In fact, this Bill I did not mention my testimony, but one thing that this Bill does that is very important is it cleans up section 8-2, which is exceedingly difficult to read.

I noticed from your biography, sir, that you're an attorney. I don't know if you do land use cases, but 8-2 makes it very difficult for volunteer local planning, zoning commissions that we've been talking about to really understand the rights and responsibilities that the state has delegated locally, because it's been amended so many times, it's very difficult to read. So this law, this Bill does that very necessary step of clarifying 8-2 along with its other provisions.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): So when you say it modifies the current law, how does it modify it in your opinion?

SEAN GHIO: Are you talking about the clarifications around 8-2?

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Yes.

SEAN GHIO: Well right now, it's essentially a run-on sentence. If you look at the way 8-2 is written and you could see first of all, I just back up and say, the recommendations for reorganizing is how I would describe this 8-2. They've been in several Bills over the last few years, including one that was passed by the house a few years ago including one that was came out of passed almost unanimously out of Planning and Development Committee last year, and the abbreviated session. It doesn't make any substance that aspect of it, or no substantive changes. It reorganizes, it ingroups like elements, so that it's much easier to digest really for lay people.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): So when it says in lines 83 to 88 requiring 50% of the area within one half mile radius of a bus rapid transit station or passenger railroad station, A allow for the creation of an as of right accessory apartments and residential buildings containing at least four dwelling units or mixed use buildings that allow dwelling units and B not be subject to mandatory minimum parking requirements. That's clarifying. Is that what you're saying?

SEAN GHIO: No, I mean, I'm not sure why we are going down this road. But I'll be clear. You could read from the summary at the very end of the Bill. The Bill does three things. I believe I don't have it in front of me like you but one, it asks DOT or requires DOT to issue an RFI for the parking lots near transit stations. It also does what you just stated that section around ADUs of multi-family within a half mile radius of transit stations, and third, it reorganizes 8-2, the existing language to make it more readable.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Okay. So I see the statement of purpose. Thank you. It only has two, the third that you mentioned that in the rewording isn't in there, but-

SEAN GHIO: Okay. My assumption is that is the intent of it because those modifications you'll see throughout the Bill, there's some small little modifications outside of the ones we've talked about at length now. My assumption is those are the clarification's and honestly, I'm guessing LCO might be able to Clarify that because I'm guessing that's how they ended up in the Bill.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Okay. So, I guess the reason why I'm going down this way is because number two, that you point out it requires it doesn't allow, but it requires municipalities zoning regs permit a greater density of housing within one half mile radius of a bus rapid transit station or passenger railroad station. And so I guess my point is, New Canaan has a pretty dense area and it's at the train station in downtown already.

And so if you increase that density, traffic becomes a huge problem. I guess my point is this Bill would remove some controls. Would you agree by New Canaan planning and zoning to control or regulate development in its downtown? Would you agree with that comment?

SEAN GHIO: Yes, I would. There'll be more permitted uses within that half mile radius, which would mean there would be few there that certain use certain proposals would not require the length in a very expensive and unclear results that result from the kinds of planning and zoning commission hearings that routinely happen in this state when there's any kind of development proposed.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Okay. And my point is I presume that you believed at the time you were zoning up a planner, town planner up in the Cape that you

believed you were a good town planner and did a good job?

SEAN GHIO: Presumably I did at the time. Yes.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Okay. And so our town has a current plans owner that planning and zoning officer that we believe does a good job. And so my point is simply I would prefer that this Bill be allow development is an encouragement, for example, would you agree with me that building affordable housing is more expensive than going through the grant process it tends to be more expensive than building non affordable housing?

SEAN GHIO: If there are subsidized rents and other rising, in other words, income restricted rents, it's more difficult to build for developers, but again, we're talking about accessory dwelling units and multifamily housing setting. I think you said they were line 80 something that section, I don't remember it saying anything about affordable housing, that's lower cost housing market housing privately developed housing.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): So, let me ask it another way. So I would prefer an incentive-based approach rather than a mandatory approach. Have you seen any incentive based approaches that your organization has supported in the past?

SEAN GHIO: Yes. In fact thank you for asking back in 2017 a Bill was passed and instead of housing zone. It's colloquially, commonly referred to as the home Connecticut act, because it was in fact, the first thing that the home Connecticut campaign pushed for back then, and it is in fact, an incentive program. And it is in fact still in place in the state, it's law.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Okay. So, and so you've been there since 2017. How has the organization supported any incentive-based approaches throughout the state

for increasing affordable housing, as opposed to what we're seeing here?

SEAN GHIO: Absolutely. And we continue to support the incentive housing zones. We also support the local restate resources for, to help lots develop solid reasonable actionable affordable acquired by section 830 J since 2017 Department of Housing put out a round of grants in this past year. That's something that we absolutely to support towns. I spend quite a lot of my time and I'm not in front of a youth folks. I'm actually talking with local planning officials, local municipal officials about how to go about that planning and how to really understand what the needs are in their towns for their existing residents, for residents of trying to attract, but how the housing market really has changed in their states.

So we've spent, I think our track record, if you look a little deeper into our website, you'll see that it's a collaborative one that we try to work with municipalities every step of the way I hear from municipalities nearly every day. I hear from municipal officials asking to talk over these complicated things.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Excellent. And I encourage you to work collaboratively and have those incentive-based approaches. I would support them. Are you aware of any local zoning officer official that's in support of this legislation?

SEAN GHIO: I don't know. This is, I saw that this Bill was on your agenda and I've submitted testimony in favor of it because it reflects our agenda, a few of the elements of our agenda, but yes in terms of our agenda on Connecticut agenda as I mentioned where a broad group of broad stakeholders, including local municipalities, including members for the Connecticut chapter of the American planning association I know many officials that are interested and supportive of our agenda.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): I understand your agenda. And in fact, your job is to increase the stock of affordable housing in Connecticut. And it's obviously that's a good goal. And my point is, you said you talked to local planners on a daily basis. I have yet to hear a single local planner in favor of this legislation. And I'm wondering if you've heard of any in all your daily interaction with any local planners, are any of them in all of Connecticut in favor of this, to your knowledge?

SEAN GHIO: And by this, you mean HB 6570-

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Correct.

SEAN GHIO: Or something else?

REP. O'DEA (125TH): This Bill.

SEAN GHIO: I have not talked to anyone about this Bill any planners about this Bill, as I mentioned, I saw that it was on your agenda late last week and I've submitted testimony, but have I talked to planners are that feel like zoning reform is a necessity for this state that it's choking the state? Absolutely. And I'm sure you'll hear, hear from planners and the planning development Committee. If they take up similar Bills, we'll also hear from local planners that feel that way.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): And that's not-- that wasn't my question. My point is I think you've answered it, that you're not aware of a single local planner in the state of Connecticut that's in favor of this legislation as it is.

SEAN GHIO: No, but I'm not sure that gets you much does it because as I mentioned, I wasn't aware of this Bill until I think it was Thursday. So you're right. To answer your question narrowly as that it was offered. Yes, you're right. I am not aware of a

single local planner opinion in any manner for, or against HB 6570.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): And just so you know, I wasn't aware this was coming up today in Transportation Committee meeting until just within frankly I think it was within 48 hours. So you and I aren't alone in having this before transportation or knowing about this much in advance. My only comment to you sir, is you have a lot more conversations throughout the state with local planners, you set it on a daily basis. So I was just wondering if you had heard any from anybody in support of it, because I have yet to hear any testimony from a local planner or anybody on a P and Z board anywhere in the state of Connecticut in favor of this legislation.

So you know, I appreciate that, you know, your job is to increase the stock of affordable housing in Connecticut. And I applaud that goal. I would ask you to let me know when I can help when it's an incentive-based program, not a mandatory program and one that is, works collaboratively, as opposed to this Bill. I'm happy to talk to you about it going forward. And I appreciate the time. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Representative O'Dea. Representative Devlin.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, Sean, for your testimony. And I very much enjoyed the discussion with Representative O'Dea. But let's just go back to a couple of things to sort of level set if you will. Could you describe from your understanding, what is that transit oriented development?

SEAN GHIO: So transit oriented development it's baked a little bit into the name. It's one that makes use of its position, it's in being adjacent or within walking distance of transit service. So what you see a lot in Connecticut is transit adjacent

development building a home, happens to be next to a transit station. It doesn't really take advantage of the fact that it's next to the transit station in terms of its density or requiring lots of parking still regardless of its position next to transit or perhaps allowing mixed use those types. Those are elements you often see in transit oriented development.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): So I just think of the local areas within the districts that I serve that have transit stations and there is high density probably cause they're just old counts with historical stations. But so they offer commercial, they offer residential, they're close to the train station, but you're talking, I think about something different. What?

SEAN GHIO: No, no. I'm not sure. No I'm not sure what you-- could you clarify. I'm sorry.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): All right, so let's apply it then to section 1 of this Bill. So section 1 of this Bill enables the TOD in conjunction with the commissioner of housing to identify five state owned parking lots, right? That are owned by the state adjacent or including a transit station.

We're not sure exactly where those are. I believe just from a quick search, the only parking lots that are owned by the state are in West Haven, Bridgeport, Fairfield, Metro station, Berlin, Wallingford, Meriden. And if I understand it correctly, it's every station on the shoreline east. And I'm not sure if that's accurate, which would include two stations in New Haven, Branford Guilford, Madison Clinton, Westbrook, Old Saybrook in New London so that they could do an ROI right, for a transit oriented development on that parking lot areas, as long as they kept the same number of spots.

So there'd be the spots that were determined for potential commuters, but I guess no additional parking spots, if there was any commercial use or any residential use. And then it's undefined. So whether or not they could build whatever they want. There is any input from local zoning, you know, who knows, but in that context, what would a transit-oriented development be?

SEAN GHIO: Well again and first of all, I think I agree with you, your view of that of, and I'm not familiar with all the state owned lots. And so I'll take your word that, that, that makes sense to me. I know they're very varied, but I think transit oriented development again in its broad sense. And I don't think it's defined in this Bill as anything more specific than this is just that it's development that takes advantage of its position next to transit.

I think given the that we're talking about a 20% set aside of affordable housing for development that the intent obviously is residential, at least in part, right? So more dense residential that doesn't necessarily require the same. That takes advantage of the fact that it's next to a station.

You know, I instantly, I'm not, as I mentioned, I'm not really familiar with all the state owned lots, but I do just by chance happen to know the Branford lot for shoreline east, at least I believe is state owned. And I looked it up and it's four acres of parking that I understand is mostly not used. So I imagined I could imagine in RFI for that law that says and it's such a great location.

You know, it's next to, I mean, most critically to for some of us it's very close to Stony Creek brewery, but the it's in a great location in Branford and you could imagine more dense housing as there is already on other sites, right around there being developed and still retaining most of that

four acres of parking. That's kind of what I imagined the intent of this is.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Okay. I appreciate that. And actually within the town of Fairfield that I represent at our Metro station, there are about a thousand apartments that are under development. Many that have already been built. There is a level of commercial business there that has struggled to be successful.

I think because there is a lack of parking to be able to draw from the community. And you can't always rely just on the individuals who live in a location, right. To be able to sustain any kind of commercial base. So that will be interesting to see how that goes on. I'm not familiar, you know, I would hope we have the Bridgeport station, we've got two stations in New Haven. We know we want to revitalize our cities, which is so important to the success of our state. But let's go to section 2, which include-- in section one, it does include 20% affordable housing.

So, you know, that's great that would help meet that goal in section 2 this required that 50% of the area within a half mile radius of a transit station, bus to railroad would allow for the creation of, as of right accessory apartments, residential buildings of at least four dwelling units mixed use. There would be no minimum parking. So I guess that would mean you could pretty much build whatever you would want and you don't have to include parking. I'm trying to envision that in my town because it's really to find parking spots in our community. If you just want to go shop down downtown. What is, as of right, mean?

SEAN GHIO: My understanding is means it's a permitted use in zoning ordinances. So rather than say not bid at all or by special permit.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Okay. So there is then no permitting required by the local town, no oversight

from planning and zoning, no input from the local residents. It just enables developers. If this is the case would make it understandable why they support this Bill to be able to build basically whatever they would want within that half mile area of a transit station. Is that correct?

SEAN GHIO: That's not my understanding. Again, my time as a practicing planner, as I mentioned to Representative O'Dea, is in the past and it is from another state, but just because use of right is permitted does not mean it does not have oversight. But it's, instead of in front of public hearings, it may be an administrative review.

And certainly permitting something as a youth is just one element of a variety of local controls that are in place, including fire code, building code you know, other health and safety issues that I'm not expert to speak to. But zoning is just one aspect of regulatory control.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): So, this does nothing related to affordable housing. But it would increase a diversity of housing stock?

SEAN GHIO: I think, yes. And I guess first we should you know, make sure I know, I sounds like we're talking about the same thing, but just definition wise, you know, affordable housing in this case, we're talking about income, restricted housing, some housing that has some restriction or subsidy associated with it, rather than just affordable in the sense that it's lower cost housing market rate housing.

So I agree with you, this piece is talking more about the diversity of housing types, including some lower cost housing types, such as accessory apartments, duplexes, three family homes or apartments.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): So, and I'm all for, you know, diversity of housing. Just to share a little story, you know, in the Metro north line, into New York city in Fairfield county it is the busiest commuter line in the nation and largely right? People choose to live in Fairfield county, many to be able to commute to high paying jobs in New York to be able to afford to live in Connecticut.

And if you have a job in New York, you can choose to live in New Jersey, Westchester county or anywhere in New York Rhode Island or Connecticut. And certainly tax policies make a big decision. It used to be that Connecticut had high house prices, but low property taxes in New York had low house prices, but high property taxes. So more people would choose to come to Connecticut, but now we've pretty much leveled out. And that differentiation doesn't really exist except for pre pandemic when we had such a glut of high priced houses that their prices had actually fallen so much because people had left the state that individuals that wanted to get out of high density housing in New York city found that they could buy these homes for the same amount as paying a rent in New York city.

But apartments cost by and large, almost as much as a mortgage would, or as much as owning a single family house. You don't have all of the maintenance. So it gives you a lot of free time. So I guess my point too is that is, you know, people look to find a place to live it's based on affordability and it's also based on commute. So if you ended up wanting to live in Fairfield, because you were trying to balance the commute with the cost and Fairfield would cost less than Westport. It would cost less than in Rowayton or in Stamford or in Greenwich because you're getting farther out from grand central station.

The property around the train station would actually be much higher value because the further you go out from the station that the lower the prices, because

it adds on to your commute and every minute counts as our good chairman knows when you're commuting to a job in New York city, which I did for over 15 years on the 6:30 train in the morning and on the 6:30 train on the way out.

So in congested areas as well, it just seems interesting to me that we would support a state control and mandate versus a market-driven approach and maintaining that control within our local communities. As in, as my good colleague Rep. O'Dea talked about an incentive-based that, you know, should there be a need in a market then great. We can build that.

SEAN GHIO: I'm not sure if you had-- if you have a specific question, but I would comment just one comment about referring to things is you know, market based, I think when we have a very, I think we have to recognize that zoning at its heart is prevents the open market. And a lot of times it's for good reasons. We know we don't, you know, the classic, we don't want to live next to a factory. Right.

But so it's a little hard to understand the argument that about market solutions and let the market build what it wants when we are talking about very restrictive zoning and a lot of our communities that only allows single family homes and, you know, the vast majority of our land area in the state. I'm not quite sure how that's a market approach.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Well, I think about within my own community, there are townhouses and apartments. These are not low costs, mind you that are directly at the on ramp of I95. So you might say, who wants to see a highway but it is the convenience factor as well.

So, you know, there is a desire, I think there is an agenda to eliminate single family zoning. But there's, you know, there are multi acre zoning

areas, single family, and you know, other but I think that the market determines whether or not we should build these kinds of structures, right. Because otherwise, how are they going to have a return on their investment?

So my only point to that, as you said, who would want to live next to a factory, but you could say living off an on-ramp, but I95 wouldn't be desirable yet. There are beautiful places that I certainly couldn't afford to live in, but I don't have a problem with that-

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Representative Devlin is that the end of your question?

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): So my question really was, and I think we can probably just leave that, which was whether or not the idea that the state should determine what is appropriate for the 169 towns within Connecticut or based on the section 2 and as of right building or retaining that control and operating on a market base. So I think Sean may see that differently, but -

SEAN GHIO: Yeah, I would just say you know, the section 8-2 of the general statutes is what is where towns are delegated their land use control land use control really resides with the state it's been delegated. So to the extent that anything is given or taken, it's an association with what 8-2 says.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Oh, Connecticut is a home rule state. So removing that home rule and centralizing control in Hartford, what would be a departure, but I appreciate you entertaining my questions, sharing some information and Mr. Chairman, I'll leave it at that. Thank you very much.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Representative Devlin, Sean, thank you for your testimony. I see a few more folks who are lined up to ask questions or make comments. I did just want to clarify though, we

keep hearing throughout this hearing market-based. Is it your opinion or your experience working in this field that zoning regulations that are not as a right, but instead require special permitting, provide additional free market sort of free the market to pursue housing in a manner that's of interest to consumers, or is it the case that you know, special permit regulations and procedures before local zoning boards inhibit free market behavior?

SEAN GHIO: Well, you know, I'm not here to defend you know, the free market Senator, but I guess what I would say is there's nothing inherently bad about a special permit process. I think it's really where we've kind of gotten to in our local planning and zoning, I think and many of you know this firsthand and that that having public hearings is incredibly contentious and incredibly stressful, honestly, for everyone involved.

And if my-- I'm of a belief from my professional experience and just in my time as a planner and in this job, is if a use is something that we want to see in a certain area, we should do our best to prescribe in detail, what we want to see there and not require public hearings other than in instances where there's fall outside of that.

And I think the problem is when we a lot of our local zoning, and again, I'm not an expert on 160, some odd local zoning ordinances. But a lot of the ones I am familiar with it there, they require its sort of a natural response has grown to be that we require a special permit for really anything. We do that locally, we want to condition things we want, we want that control. And there's no question, and I, you know, others can speak more directly to this, that when you do that, you're making it more difficult to develop, including the things that towns really want to see if I'm adding time and cost.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Sean. I appreciate that perspective. Next we're going to go to Representative Goupil.

REP. GOUPIL (35TH): Thank you, Mr. Ghio, hopefully pronounce that correctly.

SEAN GHIO: Thank you.

REP. GOUPIL (35TH): Thank you for your testimony. I just wanted to clarify earlier, I'm not sure where the conversation came from that there were no other municipal planners that were advocating for this specific legislation. I do see in our testimony that we do have specific testimony from the Connecticut chapter of American planning association. And that would be from the government relations Committee, Co-Chairs John Guszgowki, and Rebecca [Algo][sic] who heart pretty much advocating for the legislation.

They do give some recommendations, which I think is very helpful when people come back and provide us that guidance within the testimony portion of it. But I just wanted to bring that to your attention, as well as the rest of the commissioners, which I believe it was discussed earlier. Just in terms of related to, you know, the market based and the whole idea of what we really should be putting in these TOD type areas.

My municipality went through a very similar process. We have a train station downtown, and we had a brownfield adjacent to the train station. We did right in an overlay, you know, two-stage overlay to it. And unfortunately the local municipalities commission did remove any affordability to that proposals. And it's really quieted a shame because in our community, there's a real dire need for affordable housing. We have especially seniors. I know you cannot create age-based housing at the moment under our statutes, but our seniors are

leaving our community to find communities that are walkable to downsize, et cetera.

And so that was a real loss of opportunity to create affordable housing in our downtown. If it was perhaps, you know, an as of right, but affordable, would it have made the process easier for the developer? I'm not sure, but I think it's important to go back to the developers and have some real conversations, some robust conversations about their expectations of what they're building and how we can make it affordable for them to build it.

We've had a boon in our community of single unit apartment buildings going up, and some of them are not, I would say, not the best quality. So what happens then with affordable housing statute, you are allowed to create better housing. You're allowed to create better environments for those, you know, handicapped, et cetera, accessibility which is a great layer in, for our community as well.

And when you have housing, that's not exactly the best quality, thin walls, et cetera. You create an environment that becomes a little bit conflictual. So, you know, us being able to create better housing, that's going to be more sustainable. Long-Term I think is a really good priority for our communities. You know, again, looking to what the CCAPA has recommended in terms of their comments back. I think it's important for us to take a look at those and maybe have a think about whether or not they would be important to integrate it in.

SEAN GHIO: Thank you. I haven't seen the CCAPA's a testimony. But I'd certainly I suspect that they're a very wise and I would have included them based on that, on my long time working with them. In fact, CCAPA, I mentioned our connected home campaign and CCAPA as a member of our advisory Committee, John Guskowski represents us, represents them on our advisory Committee.

One thing I wanted to mention, you were talking about affordable housing, and I actually don't know how to build would handle this, but it's come up a few times. And I think Representative Devlin, you, I believe you mentioned Frankfield Metro and Fairfield, I believe as an inclusionary zoning ordinance as do a lot of Fairfield county communities. And I'm not sure how this would interplay with that.

So one possibility is you know, be explicit that this would, that this as of right development would not trump the requirement of whatever those underlying workforce housing inclusionary zoning ordinances require in terms of affordable set aside.

REP. GOUPIL (35TH): Just a conversation. I think it's important just to talk about the different elements. I know from a developer standpoint, the as of right, as a useful tool for them, so that they can be a little more agile and get their development on the ground a little bit quicker. Most of our applications do go through a lengthy process just because of their special exceptions, et cetera. And just the way we categorize our municipal zoning.

But again, if we were had the opportunity to create that structure, so that affordability was written right in you know, I could see the 60%, 80% affordable within our district is a real need. And if developers were developing with that in mind right off the get go, you know, just a couple of units based on the percentages I would see them filling them up right away, even some of the communities that got built in our district as well are over 55 communities. And the desire to move into these areas was so high that the price point went up considerably and they weren't even built yet. They were being sold you know, as a lot.

So I think there's no question there's a need for housing. And what is it, you know, again, it goes back to what is our role as legislators, and a state

to help guide development in our communities to also help support what communities need long-term. And there is a long-term fiscal impact to building affordable housing and bringing young families into our communities.

I moved to the community I live in, you know, I lived in apartments, I've lived in cities around the world, and I enjoy where I live because I do have accessibility to a train station it's important to me. And having that flexibility to choose a car over a train granted right now I am at home working from home, but longer term, I think it is going to make Connecticut more attractive to the young families moving in and people starting out in their careers.

SEAN GHIO: And can I just add one other tool? I think that you know, the towns have access to, is that the concept of bonuses, density bonuses, and really wanting to see some affordability in some of these developments, perhaps extend extended transit station is to so for instance, this Bill, I believe it says permits for units, or at least four units, whereas permitted, right? Well, a density bonus might say, well, your underlying zoning, you may say, well, you could go up to six units or eight units, or what have you, but those units are going to have to be restricted, or some percentage of those units have to be restricted. That's an incentive to see, to try to encourage the developers to build the kind of housing you actually want to see.

REP. GOUPIL (35TH): Yeah, absolutely. We that was one of the carrots that we were using. You could build an additional story on your building if you're going to. Yeah, absolutely.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you so much Representative. And thank you, Sean. I see just one more hand raise and that's from Representative Smith.

REP. SMITH (48TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair, Mr. Ghio, I won't keep you too long. I just had a couple of quick questions. So I was, I've obviously learned a lot about home rule and zoning laws just in this session alone. It seems to me it's section 1. You know, the state is the property owner, those five parcels to be identified. And I'm wondering myself as a homeowner, that there's nothing out of the law currently, that would preclude me from contacting developers or contractors and asking them to put together plans for me to do just about anything I want to do with my property, whether it's currently permitted by zoning or not, because I would then have the option of going and asking for an exception or trying to get a zoning change or whatever. So it seems to me that as the law stands now, there's nothing that precludes the state from moving forward with the RFI that is suggested there. Would you agree with that?

SEAN GHIO: That seems reasonable reading of it to me you're right, because in the end you still need whatever approvals you need. And if you want to spend your money at doing that, you're welcome to do that.

REP. SMITH (48TH): And that kind of leads us to section 2, I guess, which is where the state has delegated many, many rights for a local zoning to the municipalities. And, you know, during the course of your very interesting and educational conversations you've had with my colleagues I went back and took a quick look at 8-2 and just a rough count in the notes and the statute found that since 1943, through 2018, that statute has been amended 37 times.

So the state has either added to, or subtracted from those local rights, 37 times, or actually roughly around once every two years with it being three years since the last time. So one could also argue that we're kind of on schedule to take another look and consider what our public policies are and

whether they would require us to make further changes to that statute. Would you agree with that?

SEAN GHIO: I certainly am not going to suggest that you work on some timeline of my making, but I, you know I will say that those changes that I, and I apologize earlier with Representative O'Dea, I think I missed made things more confused talking about the reorganization language in that Bill, but that language has been you know, was really conceived back right after the last changes to there was some amendments to section 830 G back in 2017.

And there was a fair housing working group that was formed and which is meant to be a very diverse group of legislators and advocates and from all sides of housing. And that was really what the consensus item that came out. Let's start by just kind of reorganizing this so that people understand what we're, what the law actually says before and really start from there and I do think that is still a good idea. It's a very modest idea, but it's a foundational thing that are logged would be readable to folks. And particularly, I think, you know, a lot of our local planning is only commissioners that are tasked with having to interpret these things. Right.

REP. SMITH (48TH): Sure. Well, thank you for your answers. I just, I'm thinking just in terms of, you know, over 69 or so years whatever it's been you know, public policy changes. And part of that is our job to understand, you know, where perhaps public policy needs to evolve and then to make sure that we have created a body of law that facilitates those types of changes that we collectively deemed necessary.

And then just as a final comment, I think that this has been very as I said, very illuminating and probably in some respects foreshadows what our debate will be like if this moves to the floor. Thank you so much for your comments. And I do appreciate having heard them as well as the answers

that you've given to all of my colleagues today.
Thanks.

SEAN GHIO: Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thanks Representative Smith and Sean, I spoke too soon. Senator Martin has his hand raised.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): No, Senator Haskell, no, you didn't talk too soon. I had my hand down, but I did come up with some questions or have a few questions. Hi, Sean, thank you for testifying. I am a real estate broker here in Bristol have land developed, have built a single-family homes as well as multifamily housing and have gone in front of various zoning commissions and boards.

The first question that I have regard is in regards to the master plan of development that most communities have, how is this Bill going to impact those master plans of development that each municipalities should have by statute?

SEAN GHIO: Right. So yeah, stall, every town has to have a plan of conservation development and has to be updated. I believe it's every 10 years here in Connecticut. And so how what's going to impact that planning document it's likely that I don't know, specifically, right. There's a lot of very many community that won't probably want to pack that at all. But the, yes, it's likely that any, you know, a lot of the things that your Committee and other Committees do, do impact what's an existing plans of conservation and development because those are policy documents that are subject to policy changes at the state level as well.

So yes, it may be that there's some communities that haven't really thought about whether it's the use of, you know, for instance, the first section of this Bill that says you know, re look at what's going on in the parking lots and railway station

areas, it may be that those particular towns haven't considered that in their plan. And that would certainly that'd be the case I'm sure, in some towns. Yes.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): Yeah. I kind of thought-- that's what I kind of thought.

SEAN GHIO: Yeah.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): You know, after reading the first section it's almost the first thing that popped up into my head was junior Bree. If the state is going to be identifying these will transit you know, stations on call that that might impact those communities and then they would have to reassess their overall master plan.

So once those five are identified, that sort of led me to another concern because it always is brought up regarding municipal services, particularly when you start creating high density you know I guess housing in some towns. So, you know, I'm assuming, and when I read that section that we are going to be talking about multi-level housing talking maybe three or four levels, and then now you're, if you're going to a certain community, they may not have those municipal services such as fire apparatus in order to address safety concerns.

So has that been part of the, any other discussions regarding this, you know, what's being proposed here?

SEAN GHIO: Senator, I don't know if I know any more. I know, I don't know any more about this Bill really then perhaps we've talked about here, but I could see what you're saying being the case and, you know, particularly small town that has a transit station and maybe doesn't, you know, but again, you know, you, you started this question with the assumption that we're talking about sort of certain level height of housing.

There's a request, this is a request for information from potential developers. So it's hard and it doesn't say anything exactly about that, but I think that's probably a safe assumption in the most case that that's what we're talking about housing, we're talking about more dense housing than certainly than single family homes to really be transit oriented development.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): When, and just one last question, thank you by the way regarding the permitting by right. I thought you mentioned something regarding permitting a permitted use, and I almost got the impression that the local zoning board would not give, would basically just have to almost administratively take a look at what's being proposed and sort of saying, okay, yes. You know, thank you for sharing with us but you have it by right. And, you know, he crossed the T's dot the I's regarding site plan approval, but is there a public hearing in all taking place to this?

SEAN GHIO: Again I know that there'll be some planners testifying on this, so I would take what I say and reflect, you know, reflect on what they say later as being more informed about this. But my view is that you know, a permitted use does means it still falls in the confines of the local zoning ordinance. It means it's a permitted use. It doesn't mean that it exempts the use from any oversight at all.

Now but you start from a place of saying this use, let's say accessory dwelling apartments as mentioned here is permitted within that half mile radius, right. But does that mean it has to conform to all the under other underlying issues? Like for instance it, well, this does specifically mention parking, I think is not, but whether it's, you know, rear yard setback, all these other issues the Bill is silent on that. My assumption is that that would be the case. But I don't, I don't know that for sure.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): So how do we know what the limitations are for density? So is it four per acre, eight per acre, 12 per acre?

SEAN GHIO: Right. It sounds exactly that this, you know, that's not specified here, right. Because it does say four units. Right. But you're right. Well that depends on the actual density depends on the size of the land the lot that that's being built on.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): Okay. All right. Thank you, Sean. It's appreciated.

SEAN GHIO: You're welcome, Senator.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you very much, Senator Martin. I don't see any other questions or comments, so Sean, thank you for sticking with us act today. We greatly appreciate your testimony.

SEAN GHIO: Thank you, Senator, anytime.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Have a great day rest of your day. We'll hear now from Steve Changaris. Are you with us, sir?

STEVE CHANGARIS: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee. My name is Steve Changaris. I have the privilege to work for the companies that collect and process and manage your trash and recyclables and the men and women that do that work every day. And we've been before the Committees. That's my chairman, Mike Payne from Granbury has been before the Committee before we've, we've had this Bill before you a couple of times, it's an important Bill. It's part of a national campaign that we've put together as a trade association. It's about worker safety. We do an awful lot in our workplaces, in our garages and our

facilities to maintain a good and healthy safety, a safe and work environment.

But the biggest dilemma that we have since we're the sixth, most dangerous industry in the country is that our workers have to work out in variable conditions in rain in snow early morning, late at night, and we have to deal with the motoring public. Earlier today I was, I sat through and I listened attentively to the stories of young Tristin and feel the pain there about that situation. It's very identical to the same stuff I've been fortunate. Like I said to work for this industry for close to 30 years now, I've sat with member companies when they've lost a driver or a helper rather I've sat with the memorial ceremonies with the families. So we understand when we lose a worker, it's serious business to our industry and our communities.

So what this Bill just basically does is it's aspirational in many ways, it provides an awareness, it creates a penalty that when you approach a trash or recycling truck, organic struck, when they're servicing an account on a road that a car or a vehicle passing by, should slow down and exercise due care to pass. It's a simple statement. It's something that we will work very much with our communities, with our local chiefs of police and safety organizations to get the word out you know, when a trash truck where recycling vehicle is in operation that companies should-- motorist should slow down to get around.

We have this passed in 31 other states recently in the recent history, New York and New Jersey and the region of us has passed it. We have a pending Bill in Massachusetts. It's a very simple, straightforward issue. We send our men and women out every day to collect the trash and recyclables. And we'd like to get them home every day in one piece, this will help us with the motoring public and provide a little stability in our work environment we provided in the testimonies, some links some an

infographic, a link to our landing page would slow down to get around on it. I'll be glad to answer any questions. And, you know, there's substantial written testimony submitted as well. So we'd appreciate the Committee moving the Bill. And if there's any questions I'll be glad to ask. It's just, you know, one I did not mention it. I wrote it in the testimony. I didn't mention it today yet. I'll just end on this note.

Our workers are deemed essential workers and a year ago when the COVID pandemic hit our companies, our workers responded beautifully. We were able to keep the operations up. We were able to collect the materials and move them in a safe way, the owners and the companies that allowed with you know, cleaning the vehicles, changing work practices. And, you know, I would be the out of the gate back then, we extolled the virtues of our essential workers at the curb in the trucks collecting this material. And this would be a nice attaboy attagirl for them during COVID to say we recognize the conditions that you work in, and we're going to give you a little deference in the law to purge the motoring public, to slow down. So it's a very important thing to the industry. We thank you for your time today. I'll answer any questions.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you so much, Steve, for being with us today, and thank you for your patience. I agree. This is a critically important issue, and I think I speak for every member of the Committee. When I say we're so grateful for the work that the men and women in this industry do. We want to keep them safe and look forward to working with you on this proposal. I don't see any questions or comments from Committee members, but again, I am really grateful for your time and testimony.

STEVE CHANGARIS: Thank you very much, folks. Have a great day.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Next we'll hear from Betsy Gara. Good afternoon, Betsy.

BETSY GARA: Good afternoon. Thank you, Senator Haskell Representative Lemar, Senator Somers, Representative Carney and members of the Committee. My name is Betsy Gara and I'm the executive director of the Connecticut council of small towns. And I'm here today to voice my opposition to house Bill 6570 an act concerning transit oriented development and municipal zoning.

I know you've heard a lot about this already today, and there's been a lot of questions and discussion, and I think that's a great thing. As you heard from Tolland and the town of Berlin, there are a number of municipalities that are bracing transit oriented development, because they recognize that this is a great way to support development near transit stations in a way that creates more walkable, more livable, more vibrant communities. And that's good news for everybody.

I think our concern with the Bill and I think this was underscored by Berlin's and Tolland's testimony, and also a number of other municipalities that I've spoken with is that it's very prescriptive. It mandates that municipalities allow as of right multifamily, dwellings, accessory apartments, mixed use dwellings and 50% of the area within a half mile of a rail station or rapid transit bus station. And that may work for some communities. And that may be a good thing, but it doesn't work for all communities. And I think, you know, again, we've heard some testimony about this, and I think you need to look at those different examples as to why it would not be workable in those communities, recognizing the value of transit oriented development.

The state has made tremendous strides in incentivizing transit oriented development. And they've also undertaken some very comprehensive

studies to identify areas where transit oriented development would be suitable, whether there are suitable physical characteristics, whether there are other challenges and hurdles, and they've worked with towns to address those hurdles. So for example, the town of Berlin in that area, they had a significant amount of environmental contamination because it, a lot of industry there and they needed to address that and also groundwater supply issues before they could move forward.

If you go on DEC, DEC's website and I encourage you to do that, there is a tremendous amount of information. And again, very comprehensive studies that have been undertaken to assess the viability of transit oriented development, and to provide towns with technical assistance in how to move forward. And these have been very successful. I mean, if you look at old Saybrook, you'll look at Berlin, Newington, West Hartford, a number of towns. I think you realize that this has been a successful approach, but again, we are very concerned with an approach that is one size fits all that establishes by, right? The requirement that 50% of an area within a half mile of a transit be allowed for these mixed use buildings, et cetera, because there may be reasons why it's not suitable for that particular area. And I don't think that this addresses those concerns.

So with that, I would say that, you know, we're doing a great job. I don't think you need to fix what isn't broken as WestCOG had mentioned. And I would continue to support efforts to incentivize transit oriented development approaches, provide the technical assistance that needed and take advantage of the fact that municipalities across Connecticut are really supportive of TOD efforts and make sure that they have what they need to move forward with those. So thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thanks so much, Ms. Gara, for your patience and sticking with us this

afternoon. One very quick question for you. Part of this Bill deals with transit oriented development and, you know, local planning and zoning regulations, the other part deals with state owned land. I believe it's section 1, although I apologize, I don't have it pulled up right in front of me, specifically better utilization of parking lots that maybe are underutilized and making sure that we engage the Department of Transportation and a conversation about the highest and best use of that state land so that we have equitable access to the transportation.

I think Representative Lemar made great points earlier. I don't know if you had a chance to tune in that we're investing so much in our transportation system. Hopefully we'll be investing a lot more in our public transit system. We want to make sure that everybody has access to that. And perhaps that means better utilizing those state owned assets. I just wanted to get your perspective. Is that something that cost would oppose? Is it something you might consider supporting?

BETSY GARA: We may consider that I haven't really looked fully at that piece of it and that's in section 1, I did read DOT comments and I know that they had some questions about it, but it certainly seems like a viable way to approach this. And if the state does have a significant number of parking lots in certain areas that they be permitted to use them for other uses, if parking isn't necessary. I know we didn't-- I did see in WestCOG's testimony that parking is a real issue on the New Haven line and in those train stations, because you have a lot of people relying on the trains to, to get to work and to commute, et cetera.

And so I think you have to be mindful of that, that you need to make sure that the, you don't undermine the ability of others to utilize the transit stations by doing that. So I guess we'd need to take

a closer look at what would be involved with the DOT proposal, but it's certainly worth considering.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): I appreciate that. Of course, we want to make sure that that parking remains available. There's an interesting dynamic at play. I think down here in Fairfield county, where sometimes the cost of the land is so expensive that once a developer actually builds units, take the building that I live in for, it's only a small handful that are actually affordable given that the underlying cost of the land is so much.

So if we can better utilize state land and perhaps it doesn't always need to be parking lots, but the state owns a whole bunch of land that might be underutilized to provide truly affordable housing. That to me seems an option worth pursuing.

BETSY GARA: And I do want to say, you know, the council's small towns is very supportive of efforts for remote, more affordable, more attainable housing in our communities. We recognize that a lot of our communities need to do more to address those needs. And I, again, I think we are doing a lot. The state is now requiring the towns to do an affordable housing assessment. And the towns that I have heard from are taking that responsibility very seriously. They're contracting with consultants to do that.

And I think it's going to provide some very interesting information for our towns about what the affordable housing needs in their communities are. So again we are supportive of approaches to address this, but we do have concerns with the one size fits all type of as of right mandates, because I don't think that they fully consider certain physical characteristics or issues such as historic districts and things of that nature that may not make 50% with, of the area within a half mile of a transit station suitable for other types of development.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): That's really helpful. Thank you so much, Betsy. I look forward to working with you on these issues. I see a few hands raised for someone to go to the co-chair Representative Lemar.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Gara, for your testimony today. I have a few questions that I think I want to delve into a little bit just focused on the transit focus that I really think this Bill should inhibit certainly in this Committee. There's a number of issues that you brought up about local zoning and what communities are doing. I would only highlight that most of those local communities are only doing it because we've required them to and in fact, they have not taken on the initiative on their own to this date.

Local communities are obligated to provide the multifamily housing options in their community. And there's still dozens of which that don't under any scenario many more that only do so under special permit procedures. And it's only because the state has stepped up and told communities that they have to go through this affordable housing needs assessment, that many of them are undertaking it.

If it hadn't been for the state requiring these actions. So many of these towns would not have done that, and we know that because so many of them still haven't and if you've been there, they've been reminded of this obligation that I brought up. I didn't want as a former chair putting in development, we contacted each of them and they many times just decided not to engage in that process. And they highlighted that they didn't think the state had the state had enough enforcement teeth.

So I'd make it worth their while. And if you need to be further incentivized to do so. So I do think there's this tension between state and locality is sometimes where it's better, if the state is more

clear what the obligation is and what the expectation is. And you also highlighted another issue where you said, don't fix what isn't broken.

And I that's the part I want to get to when it comes to unlocking the potential of these transportation assets. Again, these are multimillion dollar, in some cases, scores of millions of dollars of state investment in train stations, bus rapid ciliated associated transit investments that sit on top of a multi-billion dollar offer state has funded. And rather than this, isn't a one size fits all proposal. This would be each town come up with 50% of your land area, a half mile from a train station. This is less than 1% is less than one half of 1% of all of the land area in Connecticut, right? We're not talking about substantial parts of land. Local communities can come up with 50% of the town of the land around a huge state investment in transportation.

And I think that's not a huge obligation. In fact, you'll see testimony from the planners later on today saying, yeah, we need greater stipulations. We need a greater understanding of what we're trying to accomplish. Maybe 50%, isn't the right number, but let's have this conversation. I think that's where you and I have had this conversation in the past is we can get there, but like oftentimes, and I think you've completed this another, and in other areas you need the state to step in and provide that clarity of what the obligation is. Don't you think we've benefited from the clarity and obligations around affordable housing and multi-pronged and multi-housing family requirements and things like that.

BETSY GARA: I think the state certainly plays an important role in guiding various issues such as housing, conservation development. I think a lot of towns feel like they're trying to address competing goals. On the one hand they're told by the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to

preserve farm land, preserve open space, meet that 20% open space goal in your community and protect water resources and make sure that you're addressing sewage disposal issues and other concerns.

And then on the other hand, it's like, well, wait a minute, you've got to make sure and meet this 10% threshold for affordable housing, which we've had some towns actually do the math and try to outline all of the available lots that would be suitable for more dense housing and have concluded that it's not attainable in their area. You have towns like Bark Hampstead, for example, that are, have significant percentage of watershed land. And that is not land that is supposed to be support dense housing because it's in many cases, subject to conservation easement.

So it is a challenge. And I appreciate that the state has a role. And I think with TOD, the state has played a role and it's played a vital role, and it's been a successful role in ensuring that towns start to address issues affecting transit oriented development and addressing their housing needs. So I think it's a balance, but I think if you heard from the town of Berlin and the town of Tolland, they explained why 50% of the area within a half mile of their transit station may not be suitable for residential dwelling because in Berlin's case, I think it was a significant percentage was already zoned industrial. And so you can't really ask those industries to just pick up and leave that those sites.

And so there's other areas where the transit stations are located in historic districts and people would be very uncomfortable about efforts to rezone that for more dense housing. So I think it is a balancing act, and that's why I always get concerned about prescriptive requirements that say 50% of within a half mile, because it may not be workable. And I think we need to look at that and maybe, you know, if you go in and look at the

comprehensive sites plans that were developed by DECD to support transit oriented development, they, they go through each community and try to identify some of those barriers and others where it may be more suitable.

So I think particularly because there is such an investment and transit oriented development and investment in housing, it makes sense to determine that before you invest money in those areas, because otherwise you're just not going to achieve those goals. So I think we're all on the same page. It's just whether you mandate it or whether you incentivize it. I agree if it's not happening, I think that that would be another issue that we need to address, but it is happening and it's happening really well.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): And I think that that brings up an important distinction. I think it's not happening very well in most places. We know that because we can look at housing occupancy rates in the state, for example, only in towns that are adjacent to substantial state investments and transportation. We're talking about how housing markets that are sitting in the single digits and vacancy rates, low single digits and vacancy rates.

We know that there's tremendous demand there, and they're oftentimes a large parking lots or single family. Multi-Year zoning sitting right next to it, transduction. And now the prescriptive element that we've gotten our zoning codes and most of those towns is you can only build that one family home on those multiple acres. That's all you're allowed to do, even though there's a train station right there, even though we know there's tremendous demand to live here. I think that's the part that we need state-- a conversation with our localities, because we know they're limiting opportunities.

We know that, and they think the section 1 of this starts to look at the state land and say, how can we

more intensely build transit ridership in our communities along this corridor by utilizing state lands. But we need local partners who, instead of saying things like don't fix what isn't broken, recognize that things are very broken.

And we have, in many cases, I would describe as country club access to multi-billion dollar state assets, where you have to be able to buy a \$700,000 piece of property in order to access a train station, because unless you can spend mature town resident, you can't park anywhere nearby. And unless you live in that community on that huge piece of land, you can't walk to that train station. And I think that's where you're going to see this year after year, there's going to be increased pressure to maximize our state resources, particularly around transit and effective and meaningful way.

And I say, we can quibble over the 50% in some way and is not suitable. Sure. But we also know that many towns are not doing a good job of finding ways to build opportunities to meet the tension in this conversation. I think that's where you and I have disagreed on some issues like this in the past. We actually would come to a conclusion at the end of things we could do. I think there's a way to do that again. I just think there's going to be tension in this conversation until we recognize that some things are broken and some improvements are mandatory at this point, if we're going to maximize our state investment. So thank you, Ms. Gara.

BETSY GARA: Thank you, Representative Lemar. I do appreciate your perspective and we'll certainly keep an open mind.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Representative Lemar. I see that Representative O'Dea has his hand raised. Representative.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and Ms. Gara, thank you so much for your testimony.

I represent New Canaan and Wilton and I know my, my good co-chair believes that many towns have failed to do what they need to do. I don't know many towns. I have litigated throughout the state of Connecticut for 30 plus years, but I believe most towns are trying.

And so my question to you is you had mentioned that there's an affordable housing assessment that's required by law and, and the good chair had pointed out that that many towns weren't doing that now it's mandated. And I agree those kinds of reporting are good. When is that assessment affordable housing assessment due?

BETSY GARA: It's actually due by spring of 2022, and it was required in 2017 and towns are taking it very seriously. Many have created affordable housing Committees to help draft the assessment questionnaires and perform outreach to their communities to make sure people complete it.

We've also worked with the department of housing and the American planning association. They've developed a, an affordable housing toolkit that we held a webinar on to provide our municipalities with information on how they can perform the assessment, which also requires you to identify barriers in your local zoning codes that may prevent you from addressing affordable housing needs.

It also discusses ways that you can identify opportunities to address water and wastewater capacity issues and so forth. So it's a lot of good information. We're getting it out there to our towns. And I do think that the conversation has changed a lot over the last few years.

And I think people are in towns are working hard to address, again, the need for more affordable, more attainable housing in their communities. There are some towns, you know, quite honestly that don't see a need for it. They're very rural. They don't think

that there's a lot of people that are really interested in coming there because they're not a lot of jobs. But others, I think recognize that in order to continue to grow their communities and to prevent stagnation in their communities, that they do need to embrace affordable housing. And that's what we're hoping to do is to help them do that in a way that makes sense for their communities.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): And would you agree with me? I think it would be more sense to take a look at those studies that come out in the spring of 22, 2022 and see what the towns are doing and craft legislation as an incentive rather than I think a prescriptive, as you were talking about once those reports have been kind of reviewed and assessed, is that, would you agree with that?

BETSY GARA: I do. I do think that that would be very helpful because these housing assessment needs will, you know, as I mentioned, take into consideration of a wide range of, of issues that towns are tackling relative to housing. And I think it's going to provide us with some very good information about how to move forward.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): I also very much appreciate you pointing out the Department of Economic and Community Developments webpage. I went to it and I didn't realize the extent to which DECD provide or has provided funding for transit-oriented development. You know, they provide support to help work with other agencies, strategic planning assistance, construction, project management, environmental compliance permitting. They go into responsible growth and transitory development grant program.

You know, in looking at that. And I thank you for pointing that out, but I would just make note, you know, there were, there's been millions and millions of dollars provided for transit oriented development grants from 2015 through 2017, but it looks as

though those grants stopped. And so I presume you and I are on the same page. We would rather see the state particularly DECD provide more of the grants for TOD development, Transit Oriented Development going forward. Would you support that?

BETSY GARA: Yes, absolutely. And I am concerned that that program seems to have been kind of ignored for a couple of years because I have heard from towns for example, the town of Plainville said, we're waiting we're ready to go. But we haven't for whatever reason, been able to access any funding or additional technical assistance that's needed to move ahead.

So yeah, absolutely incentive approaches. It does seem to be working. I realize that, you know, when you're talking about some of the larger affordable housing issues, that there are still issues in our communities, but I think with TOD, I don't see that. So I would be interested if there are communities that have just said, no, we don't want to do transit oriented development. You kind of find out what their concerns are.

And my understanding is that the state of was taking a very targeted approach to where the investments were made. And so they were focusing on the Hartford line initially, and then the Connecticut bus track transit corridor, but I would defer to DECD on those issues.

REP. O'DEO (125TH): Now you had mentioned that the section 1 identifies and ask DOT to identify five transit stations where the associated parking lot is owned by the state. And basically look at, you know, five prospective areas for a TOD, but did you see how the DOT in their testimony states that this is not the right time to do that because of the pandemic ridership is down.

We heard them testify in transportation, which they're supposed to testify in as opposed to a

housing Bill. No offense to my good co-chair. I know this is-- the idea is a transit oriented development, but ridership is down 80%. So I think looking at taking a look at the five particular areas, this is not the right time. Would you agree with the DOT commissioner?

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Certainly. You know, I had read the testimony quickly and I did notice that he had some concerns about it, but yeah, it makes sense that it may not be the appropriate time to look at this. There's certainly bigger issues that the state is addressing, but, you know, again, I think it's important to consider innovative options for addressing some of these issues. So, you know, if in the future, that makes sense with DOT. I certainly think it's worth exploring.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): And Betsy, I'll end it there. I know we've got a lot of other people probably have questions for you, but I just want to thank you because how many, how many towns does COST represent?

BETSY GARA: It fluctuates from year to year, currently about 110. So Wilton recently joined. So thank you for that. I think for selectmen Vanderslice. Appreciate it.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): So you represent what almost three quarters of the municipalities in the state? Maybe a little less between around 60%, 70% It looks like -

BETSY GARA: Yeah, sorry. I could do it quickly, but I'd have to look at my notes.

REP O'DEA (125TH): I'm an attorney legislator. So my math skills are not what they once were, but I just want to thank COST for all your input. It really is very valuable to us. Seeing as you represent the majority, certainly of the towns and municipalities throughout the state in particularly

those that have been affected by some of our unfunded mandates. And I'm not saying this is an unfunded mandate, but this is basically a go around to local control. And I appreciate your testimony here today, and I appreciate the good chairs time that allowing me to ask you some questions. Thank you very much.

BETSY GARA: Thank you, Representative.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Representative O'Dea. Lastly Representative Zawistowski.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good to see you, Betsy. You know I have talked about this at length over the years. I have a follow-up question to Representative O'Dea's question about how many towns you represent about how much land area in the state does that represent?

BETSY GARA: Wow, no idea.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): I'm not going to make you answer that, but I would say that probably the vast majority of land area in the state. But to anyway, I want to thank you for your very effective for some of our smaller towns, and it appears to be now some of our larger small towns. I think this top-down a one size fits all approach just this does not work when you're talking about trying to put Bridgeport and, you know, and Bark Hampstead in the same category. You have concerns about, well in septic.

And I think one thing that I'm not sure if this was brought up with anybody else, but you bring in transit oriented development and to one of the smaller towns that has a transit stop. And all of a sudden you've put in multi-family housing, you have to start worrying about school capacity.

So I really think that it's something that needs to be considered by the town and not just top down by the state. I have a question for you, what--

something that has not been addressed earlier today, a very specific question in section, you don't have to look this up. Section 2, paragraph seven refers to what we affectionately called while we're legislating granny Potts. In this section, this would prohibit the installation prohibit zoning-- it would require zoning to not prohibit the installation of temporary healthcare structures for use by mentally or physically impaired persons.

Now, when this was done, when this was approved back a few years ago, gave talk municipalities and opt out if they really did not feel comfortable putting this in their zoning rigs, are you aware of any town that has not opted out of this?

BETSY GARA: I believe there are a lot of towns that haven't opted out of that. In fact, there's, I know that de-segregate Connecticut, as part of its zoning, Atlas has identified towns that have authorized the use of accessory apartments either as of right, or by special permit or exception. And, you know, the vast majority of towns allow accessory apartments. I don't know if that's maybe different than the health, the legislation that you're referring to. But I think that the difference is that, you know, if a town has already gone through the process of authorizing accessory apartments by special permit, I think it's because they recognize that there may be issues that they want to ensure are addressed and not just simply approved as part of a site building review or a review which does not allow for public comment because it does affect the adjacent property owner's property could be-- affects the owner's property in a good way.

And so they, you want him to that, and you want to understand if there are any concerns relative to that. But I don't know that legislation actually, if a town wanted to opt out, they had to affirmatively opt out of it. I don't know that many towns ended up doing it. Surprisingly, a lot of them, I think,

ended up agreeing to do what they wanted to do under the Bill.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Yeah. I'm not going to wear that stood because I know that there were a number of towns that, that did opt out of it because you start dealing with this issue and an accessory apartments are very different from this.

This was actually-- this took a while to get legislated through. You start worrying about things like septic systems because you can't put this two buildings on the same system and, you know, there's a lot of other things and I didn't know where that stood, but I had heard of which initially that the vast majority of towns had actually opted out of it.

BETSY GARA: I'm trying to find that out because of that, because that's a good question I will find out.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Yeah, this is just one more reason that this Bill does not belong in transportation. This really needs to be something that's being considered that should be considered in Planning and Development, where things like this originated versus being heard in transportation, because we simply don't have the information in our hands to be able to evaluate this on a reasonable basis.

But the yeah, I just, you know, I brought this up before and I just don't think this whole second section really even deals with any affordable housing. It just, it's a Planning and Development Bill with TOD stuck in the middle of it. But yeah, I mean, would you care to comment any, make any comments on that? Because I'm pretty much, that was really my only question since we've been dealing with this all day and I'd invite you to make any additional comments.

BETSY GARA: Well, you're right, the Bill doesn't explicitly provide for affordable housing. I think as Sean Ghio pointed out that by authorizing as of right accessory dwelling units and other mixed use residential building units that it would in effect be more affordable than a single family home, but there is nothing about this proposal that would necessarily move the dial on affordable housing in your community.

And so in that sense, it may be counterproductive to a town's efforts to meet that 10% of affordable housing threshold, which by the way, is unworkable for a lot of communities. So it would be a concern.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Yeah, that's all I had. I really appreciate you coming in and all the time that you had to wait and always good to see you Betsy-

BETSY GARA: Nice to see I missing all of you. And if any of you ever want to meet with COST, any of our members, happy to coordinate a Zoom call.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Thank you. And thank you, Mr. Chair.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Representative. I see Representative Devlin has her hand raised before we go there. I do just want to make a quick word that we are entering. I think our sixth hour of the public hearing, we do have many folks signed up to testify in the remainder of the public hearing. So out of respect to them, hopefully members can try to limit themselves to just one question going forward, if possible. Representative Devlin, over to you.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I appreciate that with so many people waiting, but you know, that's what happens depending on what items get put on an agenda, right? There's a lot of questions. But I did want to ask Betsy, thank you

for your testimony. And I appreciated listening to you answering questions from some of my colleagues as well.

And I just wanted to give you an opportunity if you could highlight. Cause there seems to be a theme that, or something that we've heard, that there's a resistance to transit oriented development that it's not happening. There's nothing going on. So therefore the state needs to put in these mandates. And I think I could be wrong on this and I'm not sure if anybody here is on the Waterbury rail line caucus, but they gave a very compelling presentation to our Committee. It was maybe in 2019, maybe I'll find that date, but about the opportunities for expanding the line and a lot of transit oriented development that was factored into the valley which I was, you know, behind a hundred percent, it was just a great overall presentation, but can you speak to, you know, where are their success stories?

I did read some testimony from Francis Pickering who indicated that 40% of the was it multifamily home or transit development of multifamily housing has been built in the communities under Westcott just in the past 10 years. So could you just highlight a little bit more about, you know, or maybe dispel the myth that nothing is happening?

BETSY GARA: That's why I am a little puzzled when they say it, it isn't working in towns aren't meeting their responsibility because, you know, again, if you look at the success stories listed on the DECD's website and they list the towns, there are a number of towns ranging from North Haven, old Saybrook, Wallingford, Berlin, West Hartford, Windsor Luxe, East Windsor Enfield, and the list goes on and on.

And I know that there are others waiting because they said that the state was focusing on other transit corridors first and they're ready and willing to embrace the transit oriented development.

And as far as I understand, most of those include some type of multifamily dwelling units whether they're, you know, affordable, considered affordable or not. But they certainly do include those. So I think again, there's been a lot of focus on transit-oriented development.

I know main street Connecticut has done held a lot of seminars to encourage towns to do this, and they're getting very favorable responses. So I would encourage you to reach out to them because I am a little puzzled as to where they're kind of not pursuing it. And I think if they're not, we need to find out why, what is the rationale is it because of the physical suitability of the area or is it because of some other kind of issue that the town's dealing with?

And that's why I think we're always concerned about, you know, the state mandates on local zoning issues because they don't understand a lot of times what the towns are dealing with in terms of their housing needs, their economic development needs. They may see a lot of opportunities for economic development in that area that may be much more important to them in order to reduce the property tax levels on residents. You don't know. So again, very concerned about a state mandate and in this approach in this way.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Yeah, that's a really fair point because people still need to hopefully get to a job right. When they can find them in our state. So you need to having a transit-oriented development is great. As long as that transit is going to take you to your place of employment.

And honestly the number of, of Bills on this know agenda that have been fragmented across so many Committees, if there was that much energy put into our economic development and bringing business to Connecticut, becoming more business friendly and revitalizing our cities, it'd be pretty incredible.

But I really appreciate you testifying today. And I thank you for answering my questions and offering those examples. Honestly, I hadn't looked at the DECD website in that respect and I'm going to do that. Thank you.

BETSY GARA: Great. Thank you Representative.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Betsy, I think that was the last hand raised. So thank you so much for your time and testimony and most of all for your patients. We appreciate it.

BETSY GARA: Thank you, Senator. Thank you for your patience.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Have a great rest of your day.

BETSY GARA: You too. Bye-Bye

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Next, we'll hear from Mark Binder.

MARK BINDER: Good afternoon. Chairman Lemar, chairman Haskell Ranking member Carney and Ranking member Somers, and all the members of Transportation Committee. Thank you for this opportunity. I really appreciate your time. And to be able to speak in support of Senate Bill 982 specifically, section 16, I would also like to thank the Committee for raising this Bill and for raising this language, as you said, my name is Mark Binder and I'm with Copart.

What Copart is, is we're an international auction company. Not sure if you've ever heard of us, but we focus on selling total loss vehicles and our proud member of the Connecticut business community. We have locations at East Granby we're have about 17 employees. Then we have one in New Britain where we have about 38 employees. And the good news is for the citizens of those areas we're actually hiring right now.

So we're looking for new employees as we speak. We're a growing company in those areas. We've been working with the Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles. I think we go back to probably a year and a half now because we started this. Of course, everybody knows how last year session kind of ended abruptly. We started this back in 2019 and what we were doing is looking to solve an issue in our industry and this, and find a solution that has to be friendly recognized and fixed in most other states.

They've been very great to work with and we've been very thankful and further receptiveness and working with us. And together, we came up with language, which is which isn't section 16, and it is a solution to our concern. This section allows for an insurance company to obtain a title on a paid claim when the vehicle does not provide one or has errors in it post-settlement so the customer has already paid, there's a title that's been sent in, or hasn't been sent in and there's error and there might be errors on it and it might've been lost in the mail it might've been destroyed.

And what this Bill does is it allows us to have a process to protect the consumer to ensure that they've been given notice and then to get a title and the name of the insurance company for this vehicle's installment is paid for. So in reality, they own the vehicle. They just don't have the proper title work because they've already paid the consideration for it. And this is similar to a statute at 39 other states and the first being back in enacted back in the mid two thousands. And it's just kind of grown since then, and other locations, one question I always get is why does it insurance company just not pay the claim until they get the proper title work?

And that's a great question. And the reality is that does happen a majority of the times, but with the

multiple thousands of planning, we're talking, you know, 10, 20, 30,000 claims that are processed each year through the, through Connecticut for the entire industry, there's going to be errors and there's going to be mistakes. Documents are going to get lost after we received them at the well, after an insurance companies received from where they are, they're received at the auction.

And once a vehicle owner is paid for a claim, just being frank with you, it's very challenging to get the owner to help you to assist you. They just got through a total loss vehicle is usually a pretty traumatic time in their lives. And their willingness to help is usually limited after payments been made.

So the statute like this fixes this concern for us and allows an insurance carrier to get a title on a vehicle. They actually own because they paid for it. They just don't have the title in their name. And I encourage you to support Senate Bill 982 and the section 16. And we have some requests to propose technical changes that were that are needed to capture all interested parties, such as the lien holder. That's not captured as well as to fix the date of concern which we have, but thank you for the opportunity to speak and I'm available for any questions, if you have any.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you so much, sir. I look forward to digging into those technical changes in your written testimony. Representative Meskers has his hand raised. Representative.

REP. MESKERS (150TH): Not to hurt you on this, but to ask a simple question. So the car has been titled at that point title is transferred because the insurance pays out to the individual and the individual no longer has a legal claim to the car?

MARK BINDER: That is correct, Representative Meskers. What I think about it as-

REP. MESKERS (150TH): Okay. No, that's fine. No, that's good. I want to move, walk through. So I understand the title is transferred or your physical owner. The financial settlement is arranged with the prior owner. And now it's a question of who is issued the transfer of title, whether the owner has endorsed it or the insurance or the title company has issued it to you. So you're left without clear title to the property that you've essentially paid for. And the Bill will make that, how, what automatic at this point?

MARK BINDER: What the Bill will do, it will allow the insurance company or its agent to send. You have to wait 30 days and the sent to notifications to the customer, requesting them to either help fix the title problem, or provide the original title if they've never done so. And after the two notifications, if they do not help assistant, then the insurance company will show evidence that they've requested the title and they get the evidence, they paid the claim and they get the title in their name.

REP. MESKERS (150TH): And is there any case, or are there any significant amount of cases where the title is inadvertently transferred to you or to versus the original owner? I mean, that would be my concern.

MARK BINDER: There would be no case Representative Meskers because in order to get the title transferred, the insurance company has to prove that they've identified the owner. And so they would have to send a copy of the payment showing it's been endorsed, or it's been-- if it's an EFT that it was assembled electronically to the vehicle owner or the lien holder, because it may be where the lien holder has either a partial or full interest in the vehicle. So the lien holder is protected as well. That's an important thing we need to point out.

REP. MESKERS (150TH): Okay, I'll have to look at the Bill. I am a little concerned if there's a dispute and the payment hasn't been processed, the insurance company has paid out for the total loss and the owner is either disputing that settlement or unwilling to accept it, or it hasn't been cashed. And 30 days later, the title is summarily transferred anyway, just want to make sure there's no ownership dispute on that.

MARK BINDER: And that's an excellent concern and that is all we believe it's covered in the Bill by requiring that the payment be accepted or cashed.

REP. MESKERS (150TH): Okay, perfect. Thank you. You're welcome.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Representative. I don't see any further hands raised. So mark, thanks for your time and for your testimony today we appreciate-

MARK BINDER: Thank you and have a great afternoon.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): You too. Next, we'll hear from Katie Western. Good afternoon, Katie. Nope. We might be having some technical difficulties. Katie Westrin, good afternoon Katie? I think you may be having some technical difficulties. Katie, are you able to unmute yourself and take off your, or turn on your camera? There we go.

KATIE WESTRIN: Hi, I'm here. Sorry about that.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): No problem at all. Go right ahead.

KATIE WESTRIN: Okay. Hi everyone. My name's Katie Westrin I'm from Branford, Connecticut. I just wanted to thank the esteemed Representatives, senators and Committee members for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony and be heard as a concerned citizen in support of SB 608 the safety of

children when buying ice cream from a frozen dessert truck.

I just want to say I'm so encouraged by the positive comments by our Representatives and Committee members on the call today regarding this Bill. Just to add my voice I'm a resident of Branford and a parent of three children. I have an eight year old daughter and six year old twins. Love their summers and their ice cream, and they're careful cautious children. I'm also a friend of Tristin Barhorst's family. And as such, I'm uncomfortably aware of how tragic accidents can occur in a moment that can devastate lives and just rip away that innocence and joy to the extent that our government's responsibility is to promote the safety and wellbeing of our citizens.

I can think of no greater use of that power than to enact this common sense legislation to safeguard our children. I'm grateful to the sponsors of this Bill. I support this legislation wholeheartedly and I thank you for your time.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Katie, thank you so much for your time and thank you for your patience. You had the unenviable task of being sort of towards the bottom of our list today. So we really appreciate you sticking with us. And I agree there's nothing no more important work in this Committee than saving young lives. So we greatly appreciate your testimony. And I don't see any questions or comments from Committee members.

Next we'll move to Maria Weingarten. Good afternoon, Maria.

MARIA WEINGARTEN: Hi there. Good afternoon. Okay. Chairman Lemar, chairman Haskell and other distinguished members of the Transportation Committee. My name is Maria Weingarten and I'm testifying against HB 6570. My written testimony will outline 14 specific points against the as of

right multifamily development for your review. So I'm just going to highlight some other items here.

The legislation around development of state owned Metro north parking lots is quite vague and appears to be a placeholder Bill. What are the five locations? Will the state be permitted to override the local towns P and Z regulations regarding parking building heights setbacks in development of the state lots?

There is no mention of adequate additional on-street or off-street parking near those state owned parking lots. And the potential infrastructure impacts to the downtown as a result of such development. Will the state keep the property tax revenue of those properties? If so, how does that reconcile with the infrastructure costs that these individual towns will incur from the development if local P and Z's are not consulted in development, that would be an overreach by the state as local P and Z agencies are the best to determine the correct scale and impact of building on those sites, not the state.

The second part of the Bill, which allows state mandated as of right multi market value multi-family development or even mixed use development within a half mile of train stations will have fully anticipated adverse impacts. I picture in my mind, a few streets in my town that are all single family right now, and imagine the impact of a builder being able to tear down a one family home and build a mixed use next door with retail commercial, multiple apartments with no P and Z review. A builder could just go to town hall, get a permit and build, as of right, if I understand correctly.

Let's be crystal clear as of right development does nothing to make housing more affordable as it is solely focused on exponential growth of market value multi-Family housing. This Bill only benefits developers that would be incentivized to max out property coverage to extract the most profit. And

since it is, as of right, there was no local P and Z review.

This is a massive change, which is truly just an experiment as an attempt to deflate property values by flooding the market with excess market rate multi-family supply, especially during the time of COVID. It is a fool's errand aggressively being forced upon suburbs by city planners and activists that have little understanding of the specific challenges that face our very unique cities, suburbs and rural communities. One size just can't fit all.

The massive coordinated push of this legislation session to force passage of TOD housing proposals is really unfair. It's a false equivalent to equate transit oriented development in our suburban towns to other suburbs when Connecticut does not even have a major metropolitan city like a Boston or a New York or San Francisco, and it doesn't have most towns don't even have the adequate local public transportation.

What Connecticut lacks is a thriving, vibrant business friendly climate, creating TOD in communities that do not have a vibrant commercial and industrial base that can also offer employment along with the proposed housing expansion is misguided.

Pre COVID, there was a great concern over the overall lack of attention provided to the New Haven line. As the entire Metro north board was comprised of New York Representatives. Even the Connecticut train lines with highest utilization rates ran at a deficit pre COVID. I believe that was about \$5 per ride per trip. Per rider was what was quoted.

Now due to COVID fewer commuters, I guess we just heard it was, you know, 80% down. There are fewer commuters currently using the New Haven line and the trains continue to run on limited or holiday or weekend service on the spurs. The great experiment

during current COVID proved that employees can be highly productive in working from home. What will capacity be for commuter transit in the future and will Metro north service ever returned to the same levels as pre COVID is anyone's guess?

In the suburban real estate area, we see also seen a massive mindset shift from density -

PHIL MAINIERO: Excuse me, I hate to interrupt you, you're reaching end of your time, if you wouldn't mind summarizing your thoughts.

MARIA WEINGARTEN: Almost done. I have three sentences left. So, it's in the suburban real estate market, we're seeing a mindset shift from density multi-family towards single family because of the need for being able to work from home and having students teach from home, or learned from home.

So the increase in purchases in our towns and by those leaving the city is further indication of this. To be sure no two towns are alike in development and as a rule, local oversight of development is optimal. I would recommend focusing on carrots that local P and Z can use to encourage local development with full consideration of their unique circumstances over the one size fits all stick with many fully anticipated negative outcomes. I thank you for listening to my testimony a little long, and I would welcome any questions.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thanks, Maria. I see that Representative O'Dea, has his hand raised.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank you, Maria, for your testimony for the record, we're both from New Canaan. So I know you said you your testimony has had 14 specific points. I don't see the testimony up yet. Not to go through all 14 points. We'll certainly make sure we read it, but are there any other, can you give us any other highlights that you wanted to talk about? Obviously

the carrot versus the stick I approach I've been talking about all day. But are, is there any other part of your testimony you want to highlight?

MARIA WEINGARTEN: I mean, I guess my, the biggest thing I would say is those infrastructure impacts. And I think Francis Pickering I've seen a couple presentations he's made in the talk about how, if you're allowing this multifamily development and over 50% of this half mile area with no restriction as to the number of multi-family units, you're going to be exponentially growing the demands, the capacity demands on firetrucks, on police cars, on sewer system, on sidewalks, on all those things. And as he described it, which I thought was excellent was that those are step increases.

So it's not a straight line as it increases. So while you may be building some revenue based on your new development in the form of property taxes, you're not going to be equally matching those with the expenses that your towns might be incurring and many of our towns, and I think our local zoning chair has said that 95% of any of the proposals that have been in front of him have been approved for development in the downtown. If you drive around our downtown, there's plenty of new development and those are at market value and they are not cheap.

So I, and again, so this whole idea of building excess market value capacity it doesn't necessarily solve the problem was a very good, you know, goals of trying to get more affordable housing. And it doesn't recognize the challenges in communities where property costs are much higher.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): And Maria, my last point our downtown has the train station ending at it. And right now we have we're at about 10% of affordable housing. We've done a Scott Hobbs donuts, he's chair of our affordable housing Committee in the end, we've got essentially a 10%. What kind of an impact would this have if we added that kind of building

and residency without the parking to our downtown area?

MARIA WEINGARTEN: You know, and I think that that's also part of what's in here about parking. And that's one of my 14 points is that parking, just to push everything onto on-street parking in communities that we're settled, you know, over a century ago. So, I mean, you have very small streets. And I just, I thought about it during one of the recent snow storms and imagining all the cars parked on the street, and then you couldn't even have two cars pass by.

So, those are all issues that, you know, sometimes when you have an idea, it just can't be applied in all circumstances. And then that's where I think, you know, to throw everything out and go with such a drastic change in policy is dangerous because the impacts really are going to be felt by these communities. And you know, and there's a lot of costs that are going to need to have to be addressed. And those are all going to be incurred on the local level, in the local property tax dollars in a mill rate. And again, if you're trying to be, make a town more affordable, if you are going to force those costs on your taxes, go up, it starts making a town less affordable yet again.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you Maria for your testimony. Appreciate it.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Maria. Thank you. Representative O'Dea. I'm going to hand the proverbial gavel over to Representative Lemar at this point.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Senator Haskell. And thank you for your shepherding of the Committee throughout most of the day today. I greatly appreciate it. And we're all very excited to have you as the new co-chair and I look forward to working with you as we move forward. Thank you,

Maria, for your testimony. I see Representative Devlin has a few questions. Representative Devlin.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, you'll be really happy to know I only have one and Representative O'Dea got to it a little bit. And I'm wondering if you could sort of paint a picture for us of, so you're both from New Canaan. I've been there a couple of times either to go to a store or to go to a restaurant. And my experience with New Canaan is that the downtown is primarily just a couple of story buildings. There's not high rise buildings at all. It's very congested in terms of the commercial area.

It seems to be surrounded quite densely by single family and potentially other homes, but residential around that commercial, if, to your point, section 2 of this Bill I don't think section one would apply, which is relates to the DOT, which is great if we can maximize empty parking lots, but related to section 2, what would be the impact be with as of right development allowed within the town? Meaning no zoning oversight, no public hearings, no constituent input. What would that look like?

MARIA WEINGARTEN: Yeah, I mean, I think, you know, and I think that this is again where many towns do it differently and we have a lot of multi-family. I mean, and I think that that's, you know, some of these activist groups that have been out there have made these comments and said that New Canaan is four acre zoning, which couldn't be farther from the truth.

You know, we do have four acre zoning at the upper north end of our town, mainly because that's where the watershed areas are. And that was set up a long time ago just to you know, control that, to make sure that the reservoir has received adequate source of water. So, that, you know, was that area, but we have apartments, we have condos, we have all sorts

of different mixed use and areas that we've targeted for development for mixed use development as well.

And so I think, you know, to have it totally unstructured, and I think allowing a local P and Z to make those decisions and say, okay, you're a certain areas of our town where we think that makes the most sense because it's mixed use right now where there's a little bit more commercial. I think, why would we want to just allow that to happen anywhere without any structure? And so it just changes the landscape forever of these communities and of any community. And I think that it's the people who know best for the ones who are close and we don't always have sewer within that perfect circle of a half mile. And you have to worry about what your capacity demands are in those areas.

And I think that those are the things that we have to think about and to just overdevelop and cause congestion where possibly, it might adversely impact our commercial areas as well, where they can't, you know, access there won't be all parking would be on street. And then what happens? You don't have people who can park and use and go to the shops, and then you start impacting our local downtown businesses as well.

So I think these are all important considerations, and I think that's why a local perspective makes the most sense. And of course, you know, I can't speak for what every other town does. I just know our experience locally. So I think it's important that we allow these towns to make these decisions and move forward and in progress forward and provide some of these housing needs.

But it is a very challenging issue to try to find and meet this affordable housing need. And that's where, you know, trying to do it through forcing oversupply and just cutting market value, assuming that that's going to make the market value go down is not likely in my opinion, because a builder will

go in, they will take let's say it's a \$1 million lot, and they'll put as many as they can on there. And they'll build it as high end as they can and sell it for \$750 or more that none of that is affordable. None of that is workforce. And we have plenty of existing when this is the other thing is 830 G doesn't even capture what we already have is existing, natural, affordable housing. And it never will because that's not the way it's set up. So, that's the challenge in all of this.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Well, section 2 doesn't address affordable housing at all, it is just a mandate from the state to enable a multifamily and as, you know, accessory dwellings and all of that anywhere near a transit station. So if that was to be successful in New Canaan, and it was a huge draw Rep. O'Dea would be very busy advocating even stronger for better service on the New Canaan line, which is something he's been a strong proponent of.

But I really thank you for your time and answering my question as well. And for your testimony, I did take a look at it and we'll review more closely or 14 points. Thank you.

MARIA WEINGARTEN: And you know, can I just say one more thing? So to answer the comment about towns haven't done anything so on their own, Laszlo Papp who was on our planning and zoning, he created, he came up with a concept of having a fund and we fund our affordable housing. And we are currently in the process of developing additional affordable housing. And I think that that deserves to be said that there are towns that are doing very creative things to try to provide affordable housing, because we recognize that land cost is high, and it's really hard to build affordable.

And any of those opportunities that all of you or you might have, or in Planning and Development as well to have these discussions with people like Scott Hobbs, who works on our affordable housing, I

think getting that smaller town perspective on that would be very helpful as well.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Thank you for pointing that out. I know in, you know, in Fairfield county, in particular Darien, Fairfield or other communities that have done that in our county is a little bit unique just because of the influence of commuting to Manhattan, which is, you know, separate from the rest of the state, although we do contribute 70% of the income tax revenue, so thank you.

MARIA WEINGARTEN: And this focused solely on the supply side. So, the fact that we don't have adequate jobs, that's really what we got to do. If we have more industry coming to our state that can provide better jobs with better salaries, you know, it all of a sudden may become more affordable to more people if we have more opportunity.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Right, now it's interesting, right? Our conversation is around economics, jobs, housing, impacts on conservation, very little to do with transportation. Maybe more reason why this Bill shouldn't be here, but thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the indulgence.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Representative Devlin. And thank you, Maria, for your testimony. It is true that people have purposely taken this conversation away from the transit aspect of this Bill before us. And I would just try to refocus a little bit on the aspects that I think are important to consider right now is that yes, many towns have made great strides, but almost all of them only because they've been told to by the state of Connecticut, these towns were not making great strides towards 10% affordable housing until we pass 8-30 G.

These towns were not providing multifamily housing options until there was a state law. And in fact to this date there are still dozens of towns in

Connecticut that are not compliant with the obligation to provide multi-family housing. And we have these huge transit options that bang for investment and increased density around them because they are providing access to the most robust economic market in the world.

And we're sitting on 3%, 5% vacancy rates. And in around our transit stations, we know the demand is there for it already. And we know that we could increase ridership on these lines. We know that we could support that public transportation investment. And I do think there's a role that the state play isn't obligating these communities, many of them who are proud of reaching 10% now on at every step along the way, in fact, that Representatives and senators that they sent here tried to be exempt them from these obligations that many of them were not proud of that they've hit.

So I think there's a role that the state can play in saying these are state assets. We need to maximize the investments we've made investments in train stations and bus stations. Multi-Family housing recognizes the market demand and combined so many of our residents with an access point to great markets.

Look, I can tell from your testimony, you care passionately about your town. You care passionately about our state. I commend that I do too. There's going to be tension on this issue, and I'm just thankful that there are a lot of folks talking about it, frankly, because I do think a lot of this is in the details and it does need to get iron out. I'd be lying if I said that this was the perfect piece of legislation that is not open to amendment, of course it is we'll work on it. We'll get there. This conversation is actually good for the state though. And I appreciate it.

MARIA WEINGARTEN: Can I just say one thing on that Representative Lemar.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Of course.

MARIA WEINGARTEN: It is expensive. So, I think about the people who are going to be going to that great economic engine and the reason, you know, in some respects I, and maybe do not be offended, but to say, thank God we have Fairfield county. And that we have a lot of people who have chosen to live here who do commute to New York to highly technical jobs. And that is the reason that we have this, like you know, what's seen as a very big gap in salaries and income because we're sending a lot of people, most people who live in these towns, in Fairfield county, they commute to New York to work pre COVID, you know, an hour and a half each way.

And so we have to understand that that Metro north ticket is very expensive. So, it is not necessarily going to provide an opportunity for everyone at all income levels to go into New York, to you know, get a job. You know what I mean? So I think it's really important that we get our economic engine here in Connecticut moving, because really at the-- you have to address it at all levels of income. And that's where I think our greatest concern is.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Maria for your testimony today. We have John Guskowski followed by John Wills. John, are you able to unmute?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: I am here. Can you hear me?

REP. LEMAR (96TH): I can, we can. Good to see you, John.

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: Thank you, Representative Lemar, co-chair Lemar and members of the Committee. I appreciate you taking the time taking a lot of time to hear from us today. My name is John Guskowski. I am the co-chair of the government relations Committee for the Connecticut chapter of the American planning association.

We are your town planners as well as planners in private practice, regional planners and attorneys and other affiliated individuals in response to Representative O'Dea's question about three hours ago. There are many planners that support this proposal and I represent a large number of them. In fact, I personally am the town planner in five communities. So I can tell you that at least five communities have a planner that supports this proposed legislation.

I will, and we have submitted testimony on this, and I would encourage all of the members of the Committee to reference that. I will focus on just a couple of quick things that came up in the discussion this afternoon. While we are strongly in favor of this, particularly in subsection number 1 that would activate several underutilized parking areas to provide a much needed housing and transit oriented areas.

At section 2, we do strongly support the idea of encouraging and making it possible to increase density within the walkable area of transit stations. I completely agree with you, Mr. Co-Chair Representative Lemar that this Bill needs a little bit more clarification. I do think that we need to focus on fixed transit which is to say Metro north shoreline east, the Hartford line and the Connecticut fast track bus way because other types of bus lines and things that might be broadly referred to as transit locations or transit stations are a little bit too changeable.

Bus lines, bus stops are a little bit too changeable, a little bit too malleable to overhaul local zoning. I think we need to focus on those real high capacity, rapid transit facilities, where section 2 would take place and in truth, there should be some additional details about exactly what that 50% radius might look like. And obviously there are places where, you know, 50% of that radius is

wetlands, or 50% of that radius is already owned by the state or already owned by a land trust.

Obviously there are going to be exceptions in this, you know, the, the final version of this legislation should have considered that sort of thing. But in general I believe the intent of the Bill is very strong. And it is not just to encourage what we would call A affordable housing.

Obviously, section 1 does some of that, but to encourage a wider diversity of housing and what we would refer to as NOAH naturally occurring affordable housing and opportunity to enter the market and enter the housing stock in a lot of these communities, particularly along the Metro north transit line in Fairfield that are extraordinarily exclusive and very difficult to achieve entry for people who really need these transit opportunities.

So with that, I would be happy to entertain questions.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, John, for your testimony today, and for being with us for the past seven hours and being able to follow up on previous questions from other folks before us. And I just want to say thank you for the time that you've given me in the past on a number of these issues and for the American planning associations, their willingness to engage on this issue particularly when it comes to how to define the transit locations and transit stops and where we should focus this sort of development. I do appreciate it. We have Representative O'Dea followed by Representative Zupkus.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And sir, thank you so much for your testimony. And I did read through it I'm sorry, I'm losing my voice. But just a couple of things. What five towns do you represent or do you work for as a planner?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: I'm currently a planner as a consultant in Clinton, Essex, Deep River, Chester and Hampton. I also provide economic development support in Willington and Hebrew.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): And so are all those planners in favor of this?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: I am all those planners, sir.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Okay. So I'm sorry, all those planning boards. So the P and Z boards in those towns, did they vote on this? Did they have conversations with them on this by chance?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: No, this piece of legislation just popped up as we know a few days ago and commissions haven't been tracking this legislation very closely.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Out of the-- I assume, so you're testifying, are you testifying on behalf of the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association or individually?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: I'm testifying on behalf of the Connecticut chapter. But I just wanted to respond to your specific question when Sean Ghio was testifying, you asked him directly, does he know any planners, town planners? Is the phrase you used who support this? And I just wanted to clarify that, yes, there are.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Okay. No, I appreciate that. And so we got you, what are some of the other you represent the Connecticut Chapter of American Planning Association represents 400-- I believe you have 420 members of those 420 members. Do you know how many support this exact legislation?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: I do not know because we tend not to pull everybody on every Bill that comes before the legislature. And again, this popped up quite

recently. And so the planning association delegates the authority to review legislation and prepare testimony to the government relations Committee, which is co-chaired by myself and Emmeline Harrigan from Fairfield. And we prepared this. So the answer to your question is we have not conducted a full membership poll on this legislation, but we never do that. Gotcha.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): So the other Co-Chair of this Rebecca [Algo][ph], is she the planner for Fairfield?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: No. Rebecca [Algo][ph] is the president of the Connecticut chapter. My co-chairs Emeline Harrigan, who is from Fairfield. Oh, I'm sorry. She works in Fairfield. She is from I believe Norfolk.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Is she the planner for Fairfield?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: She is, I believe the assistant planning director.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): So, she is the assistant planner, so she's in favor of this legislation yourself-

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: As a planner, Yes.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): And are there any other planners that you're aware of that are in favor of this?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: Yes. There are many.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Can you give us a couple of names that you've talked to?

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Mr. O'Dea I don't know if that's appropriate for this. I mean, I think you can kind of focus in on Mr. Guskowski's testimony and what

he's offered to you. I don't know that asking him to recite names of people who read things may or may not be in support of something is appropriate. I think we can focus on Mr. Guskowski's testimony and that of the American Association, rather than forcing him to make references to what you think some other specific planner may or may not say at a public hearing. So I think let's focus on Mr. Guskowski's testimony and that of the chapter.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Mr. Chairman, he said many planners. That's his testimony. I just want to know when many what's okay. Let me do it this way. When you say many planners support this legislation as is, are we talking many meetings?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: I did not say, as is sir.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Okay. How many, well, okay. Do you support the legislation as is?

REP. O'DEA (125TH): No. And in fact, our testimony recommend some additional clarification.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): For example, you say it would be very helpful to add some planning capacity. What do you mean by that?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: That some resources could be made available to local communities, particularly those ones that would be affected by this legislation to do some additional analysis and to determine, you know, the existing land uses the development constraints you know, the property ownership the geography the world network too, because this requires, you know, would self-identify 50% of the area within that half mile radius, additional analysis takes time. It takes expertise and making some resources available to those communities would be extraordinarily helpful.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Do you think maybe the timeline on this should be pushed back?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: I'll confess, I don't exactly recall the timeline laid out in the, in the proposed Bill. But I would be open to it. I think, you know, this analysis should be done deliberately and not rushed certainly.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): So the affordable housing assessment municipalities are supposed to put out or create or draft is due spring of 2022, correct?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: That's correct.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): So section 1 has an implementation on or before October 1st, 2021. And then section 1 B has February 1st, 2022 for the commissioner of TOD to submit a summary of the responses for the request for information that outlines in section 1 A, would you agree that probably make more sense to move those dates back to allow those affordable housing assessments to be received in the spring of 2022, and use them in the analysis? Would that-- would you agree with that?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: If we're talking about section 1, subsection of section 1 of the proposed Bill really just deals with the TOD and state land, it really doesn't affect local analysis of their affordable housing. Because, you know, basically, although I suppose in certain cases targeting those state owned, you know, transit proximate parking areas might be on a town's wish list. But there's no reason why the state's independent analysis would prevent a community and individual community for moving forward with their own affordable housing plan. I really there's no reason they couldn't run in parallel.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Did you read the DOT commissioner's testimony?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: I've heard about it and I haven't read it directly. I've heard about it from other,

you know, from other references in the course of this hearing. I understand that he, you know, notes that ridership is down on Metro north and that perhaps this isn't the best time to do that study. I would respectfully disagree with it because you know, downtimes are exactly the right times to do planning. And I'm sure that you know, any analysis of ridership you know, could encompass both, you know, peaks and valleys. That's what planning is about.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Would you agree though, this valley is the biggest valley we've seen in modern history?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: Sure.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): So, I mean, I would say the DOT commissioner, I mean, who knows-- I'm sorry. I apologize. What town are you from?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: What town do I live in, sir?

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Yes. Yeah. What town?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: I live in Pomfret Connecticut.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Okay. So, I live in New Canaan. We're on a branch line for New York city. I will tell you our branch line is down 80%. And so I would respectfully disagree with you that this is a good time to assess what transit oriented development would be good on the New Canaan branch line at this point in time, because who knows what businesses going to re-emerge their businesses, particularly in Manhattan that require commuting.

But I guess would you agree that lines 83 to 88, the creation of an as of right accessory apartments and residential buildings to an extent bypasses local input on those building or that construction?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: To a certain extent, yes, it would, but the state has done this numerous times in the past, for instance group homes are allowed as of right in residential areas. This is something that when the state identifies a priority, it bypasses local zoning, which is delegated to the towns by the state anyway. So yes.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): So as a local planning official for five towns those was lines 83 to 88, you know, themselves don't create any problems or concerns, at least as far as you're concerned for the five towns you work in?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: There are always concerns. And generally speaking that the towns that I work in tend to be relatively small I would say, the town of Clinton where I am the consulting planner is on shoreline east and Representative Goupil, I believe noted previously that they're building a new train station there. And the town has actually been very proactive in rezoning, the transit area to allow for higher density of housing.

So it would affect that town in many of the smaller towns, I would suspect the future version of this, that includes only fixed rail or busway probably wouldn't affect them because they don't have, they wouldn't have transit stops as ultimately defined.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): All right. Well, the good chair, former chair, Senator, or the current chair, Senator Haskell asked to limit to one question, I think I'm over my one question, but I do appreciate your testimony, sir. And I am more of a carrot as opposed to stick type of legislator in particularly in local issues like this. But I do appreciate your outlook and your testimony. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Mr. O'Dea.
Representative Zupkus followed by Representative Devlin.

REP. ZUPKUS (89TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, John, for coming before us Representative O'Dea did ask most of my questions. The only thing I'll ask and you just answered another one is how this would affect your towns. But what I would add, you mentioned that you have not spoken to your zoning boards, local zoning boards in each town because of the shortness of this Bill coming forward. Is that correct?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: That's correct. And again, I'm not speaking on behalf of any one of my individual communities nor of by them collectively, I'm speaking on behalf of the Connecticut chapter of the American planning association.

REP. ZUPKUS (89TH): Sure. I would request that you ask your towns and report back to me if the whole Committee wants to know, I would be curious on how your towns, that you're the planner for how they would respond to this Bill because it will affect some of them, not all of them, you said, but especially the ones that it would affect. I would request that you ask the questions and send me back their responses, please.

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: I would be happy to.

REP. ZUPKUS (89TH): Great. Thank you. That's all I have. Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Representative, Devlin.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So John, just a couple of questions for you. First of all, I think you mentioned the towns that you represents are Clinton, Deep Rive, Chester Hampton Essex?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: Yes.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Okay. And outside of Clinton, do those, did the others have a transit station?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: Again, we need to clarify exactly what we mean by transit, but they do not have a fixed transit. There's no train station. There is no bus way station.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Okay. So this wouldn't, this Bill wouldn't affect any of them. Besides Clinton, who already is exploring transit oriented development, much like community that I represent did when another train station was being built.

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: And again, to be clear, I'm not representing those towns in this testimony. I just happened to work for them.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Okay. And I think you mentioned the town of Fairfield earlier, is that right?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: My legislative co-chair Harrigan is an employee of the town of Fairfield.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Okay. And you said that she is supportive of this?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: As a planner. yes.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): So I guess as an individual, because the town of Fairfield has not taken a position on this, correct. So she would not be representing her community?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: Absolutely not. We represent the profession on discipline of planning and speak to good planning practices and appropriate development. And so those are the principles we use to prepare this testimony.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Okay. This isn't related to the questions that I wanted to ask you, but I have

to say I'm a little bit puzzled, how an association that you would be part of that has a philosophy that they support something that maybe the towns that they represent don't, I'm just trying to align that to a professional associations that I have been a part of, but I have a couple of questions for you directly related to your testimony.

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: Okay. I would love to answer that comment though, if you'd like, but so as part of our professional responsibility, and I would refer you to the American planning association code of ethics requires us not to simply serve our communities and do exactly whatever they want. As if we were a robot to be programmed, we are to use our professional and ethical expertise to lead communities and to provide solutions for them that increases equity.

And in fact that the tagline of the American planning association is creating great communities for all. And so in times when our communities ask us to do something we know is ethically or morally incorrect, it is our responsibility in fact, to help, to try to lead them in a more ethical direction.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Okay. So from a broader perspective, but it certainly wasn't maybe incorrectly implied, or I don't want to say assumed by me, but when you introduced yourself or when we see your testimony that it would, in fact, being the association of planners with planners from the town and with the planning association, you know, accepting or supporting this legislation that the people that they're representing would too. So that's the confusion.

But let me move to my questions if you would. So in section 1, you spoke about your support for that, because it would activate underutilized areas. And I was wondering if you could speak to, what specifically are those underutilized area? Are there

particular transit areas, particular state owned lots? Could you be more specific?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: Yeah. So when we say underutilized, what we mean are primarily, or when I think I you're quoting me, my oral testimony, are those specific areas along transit lines that the state owns and are, and in many cases are basically large surface parking lots. And that's what I'm referring to. And specifically actually I spoke at a forum in New Canaan, I'm sorry, not New Canaan and Darien earlier this week or perhaps no, it was on Monday-- It was last Thursday about specifically there's about a five acre parking lot near the Darien train station. That is underused.

There's a lot of capacity and particularly if you're building something above the parking area it's five acres of prime land that is not built in. And if this legislation goes, you know, goes through if this does literally just does not go through, would probably not be built. But it's actually a piece of land that's been identified by the town of Darien for 15 years as a potential housing development spot.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): So, but I think that's different, right? Because the Bill reads five transit stations where the associated parking lot is owned by the state. So I think an adjacent state owned property isn't included in this an example I could give you that I'm familiar with is in the town of Fairfield, where the station is owned by the town, there was a three-part development deal that hasn't transpired the way it had hoped. That includes, I think the town, the state and the private developer, but the state owns the parking and gets all the revenues from the parking, the town doesn't benefit from that at all.

So I would think that would be one, and I believe the only state owned lots near a transit station, or in West Haven Bridgeport, the Fairfield station, I

was referencing Berlin Wallingford, Merredin and shoreline east. And then that would include Clinton and any of the stations along the shoreline east rail line. So I was just wondering what you viewed as underutilized areas within the scope of the Bill.

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: Okay, well, so I guess maybe I was thinking a little bit more broadly about state owned, you know, transit area. Because I think specifically the Darien one was what I was thinking of, and perhaps it's not exactly contiguous to the rest of the state land, but to me, that just means that there's a minor technical change that needs to be made to this Bill to make sure that we're capturing those state owned properties in immediate proximity of stations.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Okay. So that would be a different piece of legislation that is yet to be dreamed up.

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: Yeah. I think it would be a minor change to this one.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Okay. So you would like to see it include any adjacent state owned land.

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: I think that is sort of relative, that is clearly relative to the station itself, like the Darien parking lot for instance.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): All right. So when you were referencing section 2, you talked about the benefit, I think of what was in would that be subsection eight potentially related to the, you talked about the increased in density around transit stations was really needed. And I'm wondering if you could speak more about that because I'm more directly familiar with the Fairfield county area.

In fact, I ended up living in the community that I do because it was the first that I could somewhat afford and stand the commute into New York city. But

the Metro north line pre COVID, and I don't know if we'll ever get back, there was standing room only into New York. So what are you seeing about the need to increase the density around transit? What are you specifically referencing?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: Well, I would have to say that, you know, the experiences of any individual transit area are I'm certain unique to those transit areas and, you know, any given train station at any given, you know, peak rush hour could be, you know, busier or not. I think what we were speaking to is the more broad planning principles that if you are looking to increase housing opportunities and you are looking to reduce vehicle miles traveled, you're looking to promote the use of transit to get people from very nice places to live, to good places to work developing these places where you already have-- where you already have significant investments in infrastructure, particularly transportation, infrastructure, and sewer and water infrastructure increasing the density in those areas makes a lot of sense. And that's the principle we're referring to.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Okay. Yeah, so that brings us back to jobs and that would be great to not have to send people to New York, but have them commute in Connecticut to actually get to good paying jobs, to be able to live here. But in addition, could you just speak a little bit further about NOAH?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: Sure. So NOAH is an acronym that stands for naturally occurring affordable housing. And that's really what we're talking about this section 2 of the Bill would make accessory dwelling units and, you know, two to four family, multiple dwelling units, as of right, there is nothing in this Bill that would mandate that anyone who wanted to create an accessory apartment above their garage or in a new cottage in the backyard to permanently make that available to you know, low-income folks, there's nothing in that Bill that does that. And in

fact, in a lot of other proposals, there's nothing that would do that.

But what it does is it increases the supply and in so do, and frankly increasing the supply of apartments, you know, above a garage or in a backyard or in an in-laws suite those are lower rent you know, those are lower barrier to entry residences. You know, you're not going to charge you know, the same multi, thousands of dollars for an apartment above a garage, then you would, you know, sort of a luxury condo somewhere. And that's why we refer to them as naturally occurring because they are just by virtue of the market. They tend to be less expensive than, you know, a higher end unit and certainly much less expensive than the traditional, you know, detached, single family residence that you might find.

For instance, again, I'm referencing Darien, which has a median home price of \$1.3 million. And so entry into those markets needs to be a little bit easier. And so that's the role of these, again, it's enabling legislation. It doesn't mandate anybody to build anything. It's just enabling that if someone wants to add an accessory department where they could see a little bit more income where they could give an opportunity for their kid coming back from college or a worker that needs, you know, to live near the transit line, because they don't have a car, it gives those people an opportunity.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Interesting most of the accessory dwelling units in the community that I live are actually not in those areas. They also don't count towards any type of housing because they've been there for so long as well as many of the affordable housing initiatives that our community and others undertook willingly well before the 830 G statutes that don't come towards the moratorium that most homes probably won't be able to meet. But I appreciate that.

Do you happen to know just as a planner and I don't know if that the Hertford line, if it's fair compared to where you live, I thought when that was developed and the state had like even where they were existing train stations, built new train stations, because the new line, they were building wouldn't about the existing train station? So they had to build new ones that they also included transit development oriented-- transit oriented development, as part of that, are you familiar?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: I'm not intimately familiar, but I do know years and years ago, almost 20 years ago, I worked for the Capitol region council of governments back in the early days of the busway planning and which is now CG fast track. And there was a great deal of stationery area planning that accompanied that and strong encouragement of communities to take a look at zoning because these stations were coming, they would be constructed. And so communities were asked to think about those station areas and the type of density. But I don't know about-- I don't know about mandating anything along the Hartford.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Okay. All right. Well thank you then. I don't have any more questions for you, but I do appreciate you answering those that I did have. Mr. Chairman, thank you so much.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): And thank you, Representative Devlin. Representative Haines.

REP. HAINES (34TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, John, for your testimony today. It's nice to have the perspective of planners in here to help us out with something, something you had mentioned. You had suggested that there are some changes that you would recommend. Can you speak to that a little bit more-- you had suggested something about additional resources for analysis?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: Right. So in our testimony, we suggested that some additional resources could be

made to these communities that would be affected by the legislation particularly to help them plan for the implications. Specifically if this law were to be passed you know, 50% of the area within proximity of transit stations would be asked to be zoned in a certain way to allow as of right accessory dwelling units and smaller sort of gentle multi-family density.

And that analysis is a little bit complicated. And as we said, you know, sometimes there are wetlands constraints or alleged constraints, or the state owns a big chunk of land, or some of the properties might be a brownfield or otherwise difficult to develop. And that kind of nuanced analysis takes time and it takes resources. And so I think it would be fair and appropriate if the state were to place this requirement upon those communities in that have these fixed transit minds to kind of help them out with that analysis and pick the best and most suitable property for that type of housing.

REP. HAINES (34TH): Okay. And is that analysis, is that something that you do as a planner?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: It's something sure. That's something that I have done certainly and but frequently, you know, our communities, I'm sure you're aware are frequently under-resourced in their town hall. And staff and particularly planning staff are asked to do more and more with less and less, you know, support. And so, you know, frequently, you know, communities need to look outside to, you know, consultants that might, that might be able to help them sort of take the load off and, and allow them to focus on sort of the day-to-day while someone else helps them with this analysis. But there's another -- yeah.

REP. HAINES (34TH): I'm sorry. Keep going.

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: There's a number of highly qualified planners, particularly along major transit

lines. And I would, you know doff my cap to Fairfield's [Jim Renton] [ph] and Emmelyn Harrigan are fantastic and fully capable of doing this. It's really just a matter of do they have time the, you know, staff planners are extraordinarily busy.

REP. HAINES (34TH): Yeah, I imagine they are. The other thing is in regards to that it's not just planners, would it be engineering studies and all of that as well, I mean, is that something that's also employed when you do something like this?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: Sure. And we would probably want to include things like sewer capacity analysis or again, in those smaller towns, particularly shoreline east towns where sewer lines are extraordinarily rare some, you know septic capacity analysis. And just so we are making sure that we are, you know, in including those areas that are capable of supporting this.

But again, the type of density that this piece of legislation is proposing is not, you know, let's put up a five story, you know, 600 unit thing that we're talking about two, three and four unit. And in most cases, this will be a one and two bedroom things. One and two bedroom units such that, you know, are not, but just by their very nature going to tax sewer lines or septic systems all that much, we're not talking about anything really large scale, but yes, engineering should be a part of this.

REP. HAINES (34TH): Right. And any idea just to follow up on that, any idea, what the costs would that-- what costs would that be to the municipality? And we're charging them with you know, coming up with additional housing, whatever it is, whether it's a one family or a four family you know, understandably there's going to be impact, whether it's to a sewer line or to a wetlands or whatever. Not only do they have to worry about that, but they also do have to pay for this analysis assumably, or

at least you're suggesting that we have resources to pay for that.

When we're talking about resources, what are we talking about here? How much is it-- how much is it an engineering study and a planning study for particular town that would employ something like this in order to comply with the mandate? And how does this get enforced? You know, like if the resources don't come from the state, first of all, how much resource and how does it get enforced, I guess. And that's probably the one last question.

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: It's a big question. And I can't answer it directly because I think, you know, cost of a study really depends on the scope of the study. And how many technical components are involved. But I will tell you just one brief analogous example is that the state did put, you know, in 2017, we've talked about at 830 G the requirement to do an affordable housing plan for every community.

Last year, the state did come up with money to help towns do those studies and basically made money available at a rate of \$15,000 per town. That was what grants were available from Department of Housing to communities do this through this sort of study. And again, scope is everything for consultants. But I would say that is roughly analogous and please don't hold me to it.

REP. HAINES (34TH): No, I won't. Don't worry. Thank you. Yeah, it's interesting. I'm actually economic development coordinator for East Haddam, and we're trying to get a bike path put in and just to do the study for that, it's going to cost us \$5,000, you know, for a small town to come up with \$5,000. We're going through our budget system right now, and it's going to be difficult for them to give us \$5,000. And we used to have \$20,000 in our budget for just this thing, just these tests and analysis that needs to be done to do whatever project you might think of doing within a town.

So the studies I find they're cost prohibitive, and they're tough to get out of your town to be able to do any kind of community development work. You know, in our area, you know, our train stations are turned into liquor stores and bike shops, and our rail lines are turned into a bypass. So we don't have this necessarily issue, but we still have to do the affordable housing.

So I understand that. But I think that if we're going to be mandating something in this Bill to towns and cities, we need to realize it, you know, there's a price for everything, and we haven't even gotten anywhere yet, and we're still doing the study and it's going to cost us 15 to 25 grand to get that study even underway. So thank you so much, John. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the time.

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Representative Haines. And thank you, John, for your testimony today and being a willing partner to have all these questions directed at you. I think we got who your current employers are your past employers or any potential future employers anyone, you know, what their feelings are on this Bill. So if you want to just forward your high school transcript as well we'll consider that as part of the record too. I will be on that. Mr. Guskowski, I appreciate your testimony here today.

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: Thank you so much for the time. Representative Lemar and the Committee.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Just for the record. I didn't get a name other than many, so just in my own defense.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Moving on, we have John Wills followed by Nicole Rizzo. I don't think John Wills

is in nor Nicole. Okay. Moving on to Cristina Aguirre-Ross. Is Cristina here?

CRISTINA AGUIRRE-ROSS: Yes, I'm here.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Cristina. And if you want you are live in the Transportation Committee Zoom. If you can turn on your camera?

CRISTINA AGUIRRE-ROSS: I tried, but it doesn't seem to be doing anything.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): I just sent you a quick link.

CRISTINA AGUIRRE-ROSS: Got it.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Excellent. Oh, there we go.

CRISTINA AGUIRRE-ROSS: Sorry.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): That's quite all right, Christina. Good to see you today.

CRISTINA AGUIRRE-ROSS: Okay. Good afternoon, Chairman Haskell Ranking members and esteemed Committee members. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to an opposition to HB 6570. My name is Cristina Aguirre-Ross. I'm a registered architect and a member of the town council in New Canaan, Connecticut.

I am speaking today on my own behalf. The Bill is proposed does no tie affordability to as of right market rate development as of right multi-family development takes away the town's evaluation process by eliminating public hearings, ignoring infrastructure needs, including sewage storm water, runoff, parking, and size or coverage issues. The Bill incentivizes and empowers developers to build with little return in affordable housing.

New Canaan has been working hard to expand this 830 G, which is 10% affordability threshold mandated by

the state. We are presently building 80 new units and completed a project prior to with over a hundred family units all under the threshold, 830 G affordability goal.

One of the issues that slows down the construction of affordable assisted or subsidized housing is the cost to the towns. This is just one of the impediments to many towns to get to the 10% threshold. A more constructive approach would be to have 10% threshold funded through the state in its entirety, but in partnership with the towns plan of conservation and development and the town itself.

New Canaan's taxpayers are one of the highest contributors to the state income tax. Yet we receive little, if any, in return from the state. To take away the town's planning and zoning requirements and develop state parking lots with development that has no input from the towns will have a negative impact on traffic parking demands, railway accessibility, economic balance of small businesses located in the downtown and on property values overall.

This will net a negative desirability to live, work in or consider moving to Connecticut by many of our out-of-state residents, the current placement of safe parking areas in New Canaan are depended on by commuters. DOT buildings are also in state land, which are actively used can't be repurposed. Why would the state take away the vital part of transportation in small towns presently used for parking for tax-paying commuters? It can't be to support commuters if parking is taken away. If the goal is to build more affordable housing, then why not work with the towns and provide support and support the plan upon conservation and development and its value.

New Canaan's placement in development of affordable housing has been ongoing and successful, but we do not have many of the services or transit support structures to support what is being proposed and to

probably support this type of development in the location to state owned properties are located. This proposal we'll do unmeasurable and reversible damage to the fabric of our towns, which brings me to ask what proof or examples are behind any proposals to restructure zoning.

Statutes like these seem to open the doors for developers to take full advantage of state owned properties and develop a way with minimal access to subsidized or affordable housing. What other areas have a proven track record that supports the direction this Bill proposes? We do not want more barriers to entry to Connecticut.

As a citizen of this state, I ask why not include and work with the towns to address the impediments, to building more affordable housing and why not put real estate demands under development to guarantee that if the state land is used for housing, that it all be affordable housing, but with the town's involvement to do so with the town's planning and zoning board and imbalance with everyone's needs in the community, it makes for successful outcomes. All development requires the appropriate consideration of need and support for it to be successful. I thank you for the opportunity to speak, and I strongly urge you to consider on the untested and irreversible actions of the Bill HB 6570 and vote against it. Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Ms. Aguirre-Ross for your testimony today and for your willingness to wait throughout the morning and afternoon and early evening now to testify before the Committee. I know Representative O'Dea has a few questions for you, or just like the highlights of that last point you made. This is the proposal for you is not an unproven and untested. In fact, Connecticut is the unproven and untested model on this. Most other states in the country have far more permissive zoning, certainly around transit locations.

Most states in the last few years when they've moved, they moved in the direction of allowing greater density around their transit locations. And it has been born out that it's been economically beneficial for the local communities and their states as a whole. And I can maybe offline, if you can send me an email address, I can forward you some studies that we were looking at to help think through this issue a bit more. Representative O'Dea-

CRISTINA AGUIRRE-ROSS: May I answer-

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Sorry, what was that?

CRISTINA AGUIRRE-ROSS: May I answer your statement for a second?

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Sure.

CRISTINA AGUIRRE-ROSS: From my research, there are towns in states that have implemented these laws and regulations, but no state has gone all in, on making every single town or area in the state abide by a state mandated law. So if you do have that, I'm very interested in seeing it.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Aguirre-Ross, and I will forward you the numerous states that have done this. Representative O'Dea.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Cristina, thank you. I apologize. My voice is getting worse, so I'll try and be brief. I'm sure my co-chairs are happy about that fact. You know, as you may have heard in favor of the carrot approach as opposed to the stick approach and you know, many of the local legislators have a campaign about local control. It sounds like you're in favor of a carrot type approach. I did not. You're the first one to bring up the state helping to fund the 10% mandate for affordable housing. And I like that conceptually I'm not sure if you're familiar with the Department of Economic and Community Development had a number

of programs funding for grants for TOD development transportation orient development. Are you aware of that?

CRISTINA AGUIRRE-ROSS: Yes.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Okay. so I assume from your testimony, you'd be in favor of that type of approach where we increased the funding for voluntary transport and development, as opposed to the mandatory as of right development. Is that fair to say?

CRISTINA AGUIRRE-ROSS: Yes.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): All right, well, thank you very much for your testimony, Cristina, and thank you chairs for your indulgence.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Of course, Mr. O'Dea. Seeing no other questions. Thank you, Cristina Aguirre-Ross for your testimony today. If you could send me an email to that my email, but you should be able to see, I can send you some information about New Hampshire, Oregon, Massachusetts, and a few other states that all have as of right multifamily housing around transit locations.

CRISTINA AGUIRRE-ROSS: Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): With that being said, I think Brian Lynch is next. Mr. Lynch.

BRIAN LYNCH: Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak with you today. I'm here to speak about sections 19 and 20 of the revising motor vehicle statutes. I'm Dr. Brian Lynch. I'm a private practicing optometrist in Branford, Connecticut. I live in north Branford and I'm currently serving as the legislative chairman for the Connecticut association of optometrists.

The purpose of my testimony today is to support the proposed changes to section 19 and 20 in essence, these changes will require the vision screening for all new driver's license applications, and those who have allowed their license to lapse. Obviously before granting a license, I think it's imperative that we verify that an applicant has the visual ability to operate a motor vehicle safely.

The proposed changes maintain an individual's ability to have that screening done at the DMV, but it'll also allow the applicant to have a screening performed by their medical provider both the type of provider and the parameters of the screening are currently spelled out in current statutes. These changes will ensure that we are only licensing qualified candidates and provide applicants with a choice as to who will conduct the screening.

I believe this will lighten the burden at the DMV and for those uncomfortable with utilizing the DMV, it gives them an alternative, ensuring their safety and addressing any concerns that they may have about going into a public place.

I encourage your support of the changes put forward to sections 19 and 20. The DMV statutes will ensure that all applicants are screened and make the process more convenient for those applicants without any increased expense to the consumer or to the DMV itself. I thank you for your time. I also applaud your sticktoitiveness and you're still here tonight. You're applauding everybody else for us sticking around, but I think you should also be commended. Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Mr. Lynch, for your testimony and for helping us understand this issue a little bit more and the myriad impacts this legislation could have it's something that was brought to us earlier this year and something Representative Carney and myself and Senator Cassano

talked about screening, and I'm glad to get a broader understanding of the impact.

Are there any questions for Mr. Lynch? Seeing none, thank you so much for the time you spent with us today and for your time.

BRIAN LYNCH: Thank you for giving me the opportunity to chat with you and wish you all a good evening. Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you. All right. So next on our list is Francis Cunningham, sorry, John Murphy, then Francis Cunningham is John or Francis here? Not seeing either John or Francis. Bahar Matusik followed by Michelle Bozzuto. Bahar and Michelle, are you there? How about Kinza Malik. I see Kinza.

KINZA MALIK: Yes, I'm here.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Welcome to the Transportation Committee.

KINZA MALIK: Wonderful. Thank you so much.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): And the floor is yours.

KINZA MALIK: Good afternoon, chairman Haskell, chairman Lemar and members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity and privilege to appear before you today. My name is Kenzi Malik and I am testifying today on behalf of TURO in opposition of HB 6568. I want to recognize that this may be the first time some members of this Committee have heard of TURO.

Let me take a brief moment to explain how our product works. TURO is the largest peer-to-peer car sharing marketplace that provides individual car owners in Connecticut. Also known as hosts on the TURO platform to share their cars with guests in search of a mobility need. Let's say you wanted to take a trip to Cornwall for the weekend and wanted a

nice roomy SUV for the drive up using the TURO app all you would need to do is select your pickup and drop off location and how long you need the car for.

Put this information, a list of available cars in your area will be curated along with their daily rates. Once you find a car that fits your needs, you book the car and message your hosts to exchange the car keys. Now on the day of the reservation, the host will walk you through the nuances of the car and hand you the keys. Now let me pause here.

This in itself is a peer to peer transaction. So now that you've booked your car, you can then drive away and enjoy your weekend away. Once the reservation is complete, you can bring the car back and hand the keys back to the host. Now, I want to be clear. The peer to peer car sharing industry is not opposed to regulation. This point was only further proven with the national council of insurance legislators pass model regulatory legislation pertaining to peer to peer car sharing.

During this process stakeholders from the peer to peer car sharing traditional rental car, and the insurance industry were brought together to discuss and address insurance, consumer protection and safety concerns while it was a long, entire some negotiation it produced a carefully crafted final product that defined peer to peer car sharing as a separate and distinct industry from the traditional rental car industry.

HB 6568 represents a piecemeal approach to regulation unlike the, for mentioned, thoroughly negotiated model, Bill. Airports have the existing authority to govern the use of their premises and seek permits. In fact, TURO is currently in conversation with Bradley international airport to discuss a fair and appropriate permits.

We continue to remain committed to engaging with the airport and work in good faith to reach an

agreement. It's a commitment and certain appropriate way to regulate peer to peer car sharing. We propose the current and coil model Bill. This Bill was specifically created to address regulatory needs and inclusion of anything beyond what is address in this model legislation undermine the intent of the end core model Bill.

We support the amendments mentioned in Mr. George and Mr. Kelly's testimonies today, but kindly asked for the removal of any mention of the airport in his model legislation. On behalf of TURO, I urge the Committee to uphold the original intent of the NCOIL model Bill and amend HB 6568 to language that was collectively agreed upon by key stakeholders here today. Thank you for your time and consideration.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Ms. Malik, for your testimony and for sticking with us today. I just want to clarify started off with an in deep opposition. I want to make sure we have the same understanding. It sounds as if, based upon your testimony that you are in agreement with about 15 of the 16 sections in the Bill, and there was disagreement over one of them with respect to Bradley airport and ensuring that there's an agreed on operational agreement between the airport and any P2P companies, my understanding your opposition slash support, but my opposition correctly, or am I getting something wrong?

KINZA MALIK: No. Yeah, so we do oppose the Bill and due to the fact that we are asking for it to be amended. So we oppose until is amended with no airport language in it.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Okay. So, we have representation earlier from the insurance association of Connecticut, that there is upcoming updates to the model language that are largely non-controversial with respect to the insurance provisions contained to rental cars. Is that your assessment of that as

well? And are those upcoming updates, the model language non-controversial?

KINZA MALIK: That's correct. Yes. We are in line with the updates the insurance updates and we're aligned with the members of the-- other members of the peer car sharing company that spoke today, as well as the insurance association of Connecticut as well.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you. And just again, to clarify, we're all on the same page when it comes to about 15 of the 16 sections, we are all on the same page about the relevant updates that we think we might need to make reflecting new language that could be included in the model language. And we're just working on that airport component before we have a kumbaya moment amongst all of us, is that I think I understand, but I just want to make sure I'm not missing something.

KINZA MALIK: Definitely no, of course. Yes, it's a few things, right? Of course it's updating it to the most current version of the NCOIL model Bill. There are definite initial changes that need to reflect the same thing that's reflected in the original NCOIL Bill, as well as the subtraction of the airport language.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you. Representative Carney.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Kinza, it's nice to see you again, thank you for holding tight and sticking with us for so long. I just have a couple of questions. So enterprise did testify before with an amendment to that airport language, have you had a chance to see it? And if so, would you care to comment on it at all?

KINZA MALIK: Unfortunately I believe that was uploaded right before I was getting on this call, so

I haven't had a chance to look at it thus far, but we'd be happy to sort of circle back with you and with our thoughts.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Okay. All right. That would be helpful. And you know, you mentioned at the beginning of your testimony, this is a new concept. I didn't really know what it was until about a month ago. So I'd imagine a lot of my colleagues don't know how TURO operates or peer to peer car sharing. So if you could you just go through the tax structure of peer to peer car sharing to kind of give folks an idea of how this is taxed and how the state collects revenue?

KINZA MALIK: Yes, of course. So that's a wonderful question. And currently TURO does collect the 6.3 sales tax here in the state of Connecticut on every transaction. As you know, there is no peer to peer car sharing and tax here in the state of Connecticut. But I do want to recognize that what we're talking about taxes understanding that, you know, Connecticut peer to peer car sharing car owners are at a tax disadvantage against big rental car companies here in the states.

You know, when you purchase your vehicle here in the state of Connecticut and you paid sales tax on it big rental companies, when they purchase their vehicles here in the state of Connecticut, they do not pay sales tax on that, and that entire tax loophole equates to about \$57 million here in the state of Connecticut annually. And so all we ask is that if we're going to have a conversation about taxes, that we kind of come at it with a holistic approach.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): All right. I appreciate that. And you know, this is, again, this is such a new concept, but I look forward to continuing conversations with TURO and you, and you know, with the rental car companies and to try to come up with the best legislation is I know NCOIL'S amending

there. So hopefully we can get all of that worked into what we'll pass here. So we'll have legislation that will hopefully be good for a little while, at least. But, but again, I appreciate you coming on and testifying and look forward to continuing to working with you.

KINZA MALIK: As do I, thank you so much.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you again, Ms. Malik for your testimony and for sticking with us. And we will likely be reaching out to you soon. Let's look, we can work on some of the final details of this legislation.

KINZA MALIK: Wonderful, thank you so much for your time.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Of course. We have Krista Ostuno, sorry if I got your name wrong, please tell me I'm an idiot.

KRISTA OSTUNO: That's okay. It's Ostuno.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you.

KRISTA OSTUNO: Good evening, Co-Chairs Lemar, Haskell, vice chairs and members of the Transportation Committee. My name is Krista Ostuno and I'm a lifelong resident of Cheshire and the mother of four boys. And I'm here to ask for your support for Senate Bill 608, as you have previously heard throughout the day on June 12th, 2020 Tristin lost his life in a tragic incident involving an ice cream truck and another vehicle.

Tristin, and a group of our friends, children, including two of my own, had to cross the road to access the ice cream truck. When Tristin attempted to return to the yard. A vehicle passed around the ice cream truck from behind and struck him. I was present that evening and two of my boys were right

behind Tristin, who just happened to be the first one to get his ice cream.

I live every day with the reality that in a split second one or both of my boys or the entire group of our friends, children could have been taken in a moment. The Barhorst, family lost their son and brother, and my son lost his best friend. As we struggle each day to put the pieces back together without Tristin in our lives. I hope you will, as Tyler asked, take this as an opportunity by acting swiftly through this proposed Senate Bill 608. So such a horrific event can be avoided in the future.

As Christi mentioned in her testimony, the driver of the vehicle who was also young and not experienced enough to fully comprehend the possibility of children present as the truck had no flashing signals or arm activated. I have two older teenage boys, and all I could think that night was it could have been them sitting there as well.

This legislation is imperative to create a safer environment, not only for our children for, but for all those involved in such activities, including the drivers and the vendors who make a living, serving our communities.

The proposed legislation requirements would put motor vehicle drivers on notice that children may be present and thus influence the driver's behavior and further require ice cream truck operators to activate their signs at each stop and require vehicles to stop while the sign is extended.

Hopefully the final language of this Bill can clarify the stop and proceed with caution. So it is clear to drivers and becomes part of the driver's education process for teenagers to reiterate the ice cream truck involved in this incident had such equipment attached to the vehicle, but the operator chose not to activate the sign.

As members of the legislature, you have the ability to bring effective change to people's lives and protect the safety of Connecticut's children, families, drivers, and the small business owners that this law provides guidance for. I urge you to support Senate Bill number 608 and identify this Bill is Tristin's law to honor the most amazing and incredible soul that was lost. Thank you for your time, your energy and the support that you've expressed throughout this hearing today. Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Krista, for your testimony and for your willing to stay with us most of the day today and provided, I know it was not an easy thing to talk about. Not an easy thing to hear about, and certainly not an easy thing to experience and the opportunity to talk to you today and the ability for anyone to turn grieve into advocacy is difficult and I know they count on family friends, parents, folks with similar shared experiences. They have their back and you certainly have today. And I appreciate your testimony. Are there any questions for Krista? Seeing none, thank you again for your testimony today.

KRISTA OSTUNO: Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Erin Sheehan. Oh, hi Erin. How are you? Good to see you today.

ERIN SHEEHAN: Hi, how are you? Hi everyone. Thank you. Representative Lemar, Senator Haskell, Representative Simms, Senator Somers, Representative Carney and esteemed members of the Transportation Committee. I'm Erin Sheehan. I'm testifying today on behalf of Connecticut voices for children. We're testifying in support of HB 6570 an act concerning transit oriented development and municipal zoning. So there's more detail on this in our submitted testimony, but in short, the passage of this Bill will increase housing diversity and affordability support Connecticut's economy and make this state a more attractive place to live.

So first passage of this Bill will increase housing diversity and affordability. Transit oriented development is an important component to addressing this challenge. Multifamily housing, ADUs and mixed use residences are generally smaller and more affordable. This isn't just about housing that is deed restricted, affordable housing, but also diverse types of housing available to middle income families, young people early on in their careers and older adults looking to downsize.

Additionally transit oriented development will support Connecticut's transportation infrastructure. When housing is built in close proximity to transit, it can provide a reliable source of regular transit riders supporting the financing and long-term viability of our public transportation. Transit oriented development can also reduce traffic congestion and slow the crumbling of Connecticut's main transportation routes.

Finally transit oriented development will make the state a more attractive place to live homes in close proximity to transit, have more resilient property values in the face of economic downturns. Individuals living near transportation have better access to jobs and access to transit can lower average monthly costs. At the same time research suggests that transit oriented development has its best a positive impact on the property values of surrounding neighborhoods and at worst a neutral effect on property values.

To further strengthen this Bill, we suggest adding language requiring that any housing construction with 10 or more units set aside 10% or more of their units to be designated as affordable housing as defined by section 8-30 G. So in summary, this Bogle increased access to more affordable and more diverse housing boosts Connecticut's economy and support all Connecticut residents. So for these reasons,

Connecticut voices for children supports HB 6570, and with that, I'm happy to answer any questions.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you for your testimony today. And I don't know if you've been on at all earlier. It's been a pretty robust conversation around this Bill. Both its tens and its essentially implications for different towns across the state. You might not be surprised that Representative O'Dea has a few questions for you.

ERIN SHEEHAN: I am not surprised.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Representative O'Dea.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair and Ms. Sheehan and the good news is my voice is getting worse and worse as the night goes on. So my chairs are extremely happy. And I'll just be brief. What town do you live in Ms. Sheehan?

ERIN SHEEHAN: I live in New Haven.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Okay. So you may have heard, I live in New Canaan and I will tell you I support much of section. I would support section 1 if we moved the dates out a year. And I know there's an amendment that talked about-- maybe the co-chair, it could be a bipartisan Bill on section 1, section 2, my concern is really with lines 83 to 88. And I believe from your testimony, you believe that this Bill will increase diversity affordability. And have you ever been New Canaan by chance in the downtown area?

ERIN SHEEHAN: I have not.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): So, I owe you a cup of coffee for asking you all these questions at the end of the night, but New Canaan the downtown area where the train station is, is already very crowded with traffic and shopping. And so I would submit to you that traffic will not decrease with affordable

housing being built in the downtown area. It will get worse, but and New Canaan I don't know if you're aware of this but New Canaan has about 10% now, affordable housing over I believe you may have heard the testimony of Maria Weingarten.

Our former chair of P and Z was independent [Laszlo Papp] an amazing man and still very influential in town and he started a fee that builders would have to pay so that we could develop affordable housing. And these are some of the things that I was talking about earlier, carrot versus stick. So, I guess my, my, my, I know you mentioned it briefly, but how do you believe particularly lines 83 to 88 will increase diversity and affordability in a town like new Canaan that's 98% already developed and very crowded in the downtown area?

ERIN SHEEHAN: Yeah, absolutely. So first of all, congrats to New Canaan on meeting those affordable housing requirements and getting there. I do just want to really quickly speak to the traffic point. What I was referring to when it comes to traffic is that when we increase our ridership on transit in Connecticut, we're going to have less people on the main highways in Connecticut. And there's numerous studies to support that evidence in other states.

In terms of more diversity of housing and more affordable housing, I can't speak to the specifics of the housing market in New Canaan. And it may very well be that they already have some mixed use housing near their train station, or they may have some multifamily housing near their train station, but generally across the board, we know that not every community in Connecticut is making use of the land near train stations or the CT frost fast-track stations. So this Bill would increase the diversity of housing. And when I say affordable housing as this Bill is written, I'm referring to naturally occurring affordable housing. I think the speaker earlier defined that. So that's just housing that is

generally speaking, lower cost than say purchasing a single family home.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Fair enough. And thank you so much for your testimony and for sticking out. And thank you to my co-chairs. I may be done for the evening to your happiness.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): That would certainly make me-- I'm sorry. Now, I believe Representative Devlin you're next.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Erin, I just wanted to understand a couple of things about what you were saying. Particularly in relation to testimony that we heard a little bit earlier and it also is around lines, 83 to 88, which is the as of right building within a half mile of a transit station.

One of the things that somebody had said before was while it would just be small development. But what you were suggesting is that you'd like to see is that developments with 10 or more units would have 10% affordable housing because this doesn't currently address anything with affordable housing. It was also implied that it was really focused, although it says of right, so there's, anyone can do anything, right. That it would be smaller developments, but you envision this really as potentially being large?

ERIN SHEEHAN: I wouldn't say that's necessarily what I'm envisioning. I included that section about anything with 10 or more units, just to ensure that if there are larger developments being constructed, say a building with 10 units in it that it can still be profitable for developers while also ensuring that there's affordable housing deed restricted, affordable housing in Connecticut towns.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Okay. I do agree with something that you said, which was, you know,

housing near transit, right. Will bring riders and I think that's why we see the building that we do and the desirability of living in Fairfield county, primarily by commuters to New York city. And that the land prices, the closer you are to those train stations, because, you know, as you move out and even away from the training stations, your costs get lower.

I can give you an example, a \$50,000 house in Kentucky cost \$200,000 here. And that was in 1988. And that \$200,000 home at that point in Fairfield was probably maybe a hundred thousand elsewhere. And it all had to do right with supply and demand of people working in New York city, commanding higher salaries for good paying jobs. So provided we could actually encourage companies to come to Connecticut and offer good paying jobs.

Do you see areas that, you know, maybe there isn't currently the density that like Rep. O'Dea talked about in New Canaan and I think of my community in Fairfield where we have multiple developments in multiple areas, some downtown, many nearer, other train station, some near the merit Park way? There are some near 95. I don't know if you're familiar at all. You know, with the town of Fairfield, but finding a parking spot anywhere even to be able to go out for lunch or to shop, let alone, if you, I don't know if it's feasible to think that somebody would not at all have a car because they solely rely on Metro north, particularly if they worked somewhere that wasn't on that line. Maybe they're going to go to New Haven to get one of the jobs that are available in that city. But can you speak at all about you know, where you would see opportunity? We talked about the CT bus, the CT rail line fast track.

ERIN SHEEHAN: Yeah, I think just right off the bat, thinking about around those fast-track stations really comes to mind right away for me. I'm not an expert on every town in Connecticut. I haven't

visited the areas surrounding each of these train stations or the fast track station. So I can't speak to the specifics there, but I think that's where it's up to the town to determine the 50% of land. Or I know there's been some discussion in the Committee about lowering that threshold or maybe changing that threshold, but either way, it's up to the town to determine where those specific zones would be for the ADUs to be allowed, or the slightly more dense housing.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): We talked to somebody before and she was asked where she lives and why she chose to live there. And it was because of her job. And then her husband as well. So ideally people want to live close to where they work, right?

ERIN SHEEHAN: Yeah. I mean people do, but I know that that's not everybody's circumstance. Some people may be pulled to live somewhere else for a variety of reasons. So supporting our public transportation is really important.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Oh, I do agree with that. I also agree with our towns being able make the best decisions for themselves and retaining home rule. But I appreciate your comments today and explaining further what some of them actually meant. I appreciate that very much. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you Representative Devlin. And I don't think would surprise you to know that the price gap between Kentucky and Connecticut has gotten worse over the last 40 years. And some might argue has a lot to do with our overly restrictive land use and zoning regulations that we have in our state.

Michigan, I'm not going to ask you to go too far afield of what your organization is going to testify on, but I'd also, you mentioned not being too familiar with a stops along CT fast track. I would,

as someone who takes a CT fast track quite frequently in my commute to Hartford, there's tremendous growth around the Meriden train station. Almost all of it on a multifamily basis. There's good, incredible rezoning and planning around west Hartford. It's about their proposed locations. There's been a lot of work around CT fast track, all the folks that are going new stations generally, I've been pretty good about incorporating mixed use multi-housing of multi-family housing in and around their train stations, because they recognize the extraordinary state asset, the scores of millions of dollars put on top of a multi-billion dollar state asset.

Some of the other towns who've had these resources for the last hundred years, maybe don't want to open up the doors and in effect we had, but I have been referring to as country club train stations, where you have to buy in many cases, multimillion dollar homes, so that you can have access to buying a \$700 parking pass in order to access the train station in that town. And I think that's what we're trying to do here. And I think it's what your organization is speaking to is how do you create equity and access among the numerous state investments that have totaled billions upon billions of dollars. And I think that's where we should try to focus our conversation. How do we maximize the state resources that we could have put anywhere, but we put them in Fairfield county and we put them in places where the land costs are now so extraordinary?

And the regulations around land use are so cumbersome and cumbersome that it's almost impossible for us to develop anything that we put around new train stations all through our state. Thank you for your testimony.

ERIN SHEEHAN: Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): All right. We're at closing time almost we have just a few more folks before us today

and I think I'm pulling up my list. We have Edmond Warchick followed by Mary Ann Turner.

EDMOND WARCHICK: It's Warchick.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Edmond, I'm so sorry, Mr. Warchick, you're next followed by Mary Ann Turner.

EDMOND WARCHICK: Okay. Thank you so much for stepping in. I think part of the issue that I keep hearing is the economic development in Fairfield county. And the diversity here, I'm in Weston Connecticut. I am a local roofing contractor, so I'm not extremely wealthy person, but I am on the local town Committee, the building Committee here, I am not representing them. I am here just talking for myself and opposed to the HB 6570.

I find that if you take the local zoning from any of the towns, whether it's New Canaan, Westport, Weston any of the rural suburbs in our state it's going to hurt it because when you have Hartford giving any direction, you find that it's going to be the wrong way for most of the small towns with Norwalk, we're working on a couple of developments in Norwalk. There are a lot of multifamily buildings going up all over the state.

We typically put in bids on all of these projects, but you have the state involved in a number of them. And then you have private developers involved when you start making the zoning changes up in Hartford, that don't coincide with a small town like Weston. You find that you are going to run into issues, but you know, whether it's for a waste treatment water being provided to a home or whatever that might be when it comes to the local zoning that we need here.

What we need in Weston may not be what they need in Norwalk or what you need in New Haven. And I understand that you're trying to make, you know diversity for people, but if you can't afford to move into an area prior to an affordable housing

going up, how are you going to be able to support yourself in that community and the amount of resources that it's going to take to help out people that go into these communities is even more difficult.

So to take the zoning from the local towns and have Hartford give direction to all these different towns in Connecticut, it's going to be another tax. It's going to be another Committee that needs to approve things and approach it like it does with anything. And all it's ever going to do is slow down what we already do very well here.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Mr. Warchick for your testimony. And thank you for sticking out this evening with so much of a testimony that you've heard, I'm sure you've gotten a broader understanding of a lot of the thoughts that people are having on this issue. And I thank you for engaging with us.

EDMOND WARCHICK: Yeah, it's been a long day. I've been on this since I was at my office earlier this afternoon. So it's been quite the day.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): I mean, if you don't mind, Representative Devlin has a few questions for you or maybe I'm not sure. Representative Devlin.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Edmond thank you for sticking it out to be with us here tonight. You, so let me ask you this. I mean, I totally agree with you that, you know one side has kind of fixed all decisions made out of Hartford for better supposed to be applied to our 169 unique towns. You know, I don't necessarily support that from a zoning perspective, but you mentioned that you live in Weston. You do a lot of work in Norwalk and I've seen a tremendous amount of development within Norwalk. But this wouldn't necessarily impact Weston directly.

So I just want you to speak a little bit more about only because I don't believe there's a rail station in Weston, but I would just want to speak, have you spoken a little bit more about what drove you to spend your day waiting to testify and then sharing your thoughts with us, which I appreciate very much.

EDMOND WARCHICK: No, there is not a direct rail. I mean, we're close to one where our home is we're not far from one of the Wilton stops. But you know, I'm concerned about the zoning to be honest with you, that that's my big concern is to take away. Like I said, I'm on the local building Committee here. I've been in the building industry for 35 years. I run a commercial roofing company here in the state. I have an office in Welton. I have an office in New York and we are doing a couple of those buildings our firm is doing a couple of roofs on those big buildings going up. And Weston being a part of the local building Committee and us having control over the zoning that happens here is important to our town. And, you know, not everyone, I don't speak for everybody in the town, but I certainly speak for the people that I've spoken to that they, you know, people are opposed to, we want to control what happens in our town.

We feel that it's important for us to make the right choices for our families, for our kids and for other people in the community to keep the zoning local. And I'm that's for every town. I don't know about the really big towns. I know Norwalk is a fairly slow moving bureaucracy and it's hard to get things long there. But in Westport, you know, I've dealt with planning and zoning there, and they have certain restrictions that they look for, you know, to put up houses, to do any work. And, you know, with regards to the cost of living in our area, you know, it's a direct impact of New York city, you know, and Stamford is going through a building, boom.

I mean, we're doing buildings down there as well. And you know, a lot of the contractors that are actually working in our state are coming from New York to work here because there are certain restrictions we don't put on contractors that they put on in New York, you know, for me to do work in New York, literally it triples my costs of work opposed to Connecticut.

So you have a lot of people coming out from out-of-state working here and then bringing their money back across the line where I just, we ended up my firm just hired 10 new employees from Waterbury to Bridgeport, to Stratford, and they drive down to Norwalk every day and they park there. You know, would it be a better way to incentivize companies like mine where I would do a commuter van for all my employees, one pickup, everyone goes there. We all come together. Absolutely. You know, but taking away local zoning and trying to you know, put around, you know, around tag into a square hole by creating some kind of housing for people. They're not going to move down here.

You know, the people that are employed by me, aren't moving here. They're happy where they are. And they're not going to take the railway to get down to work. It's just too cumbersome being cumbersome you know what I mean? By the time they get on the railway, get down to here and then take a bus from the south north train station. So the job it's 10 o'clock in the morning, the day is over, you know, it just doesn't, it doesn't work. And to take those local zoning away from all of the small towns that this is not going to affect, it's just, I think it's a step too far for Hartford to do.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Oh, no, I do appreciate that very much. And it's funny, so here we are, again, talking about zoning in transportation, but this is part of a broader agenda that has been chunked out in little pieces that you can't always see the big picture. But I, you know, I've never heard anybody

say, gee, I sure wish Hartford would take over our zoning decisions. But I appreciate, you know, your explanation and your insights very much. Thanks so much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Representative Devlin. I just want to highlight off that point that the residential vacancy rates in lower Connecticut from Stamford to Bridgeport to New Haven are at low single digit levels, which the analysis is that is the unhealthy housing market. Not because prices are falling, but because our supplies are too constraint and we haven't done enough.

And that Connecticut, you often hear like Connecticut is not growing Connecticut needs to grow. Well, guess what? We don't have the units in the places where they are in most demand. And a lot of that does have to do with local zoning that is more prohibitive than almost anywhere else in the country. I think that's the challenge that we're going to face. That's the tension we're seeing in this Committee. We put billions of dollars of resources into state resources into these transit hubs that connect us beyond our borders, tens of millions of dollars.

And I think the challenge we're going to face is we know that there's pent up demand to live in our communities. We know that it's connected as an attractive state. We know that our residential vacancy rates are some of the lowest in the country. We know we're not building units. There is demand to live in our state. We don't make it easy. And I think local zoning has something to do with it when we're in some of the most restrictive in the entire country. That's I think that's the tension we're going to have and what we're going to have to talk through and figure out --

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): You know Mr. Chairman, if I may, just, since you referenced Fairfield county which I might be a little bit more familiar with the

housing situation was quite different pre COVID and you are correct. You can barely keep a house on the market. And in fact, there is a significant desire for larger lot zoned areas, even people who live in our desirable beach area because of being able to kind of have that space, if you will. So I bet your numbers they're spot on and it's very difficult to find a home and it is finally a sellers' market in Fairfield.

EDMOND WARCHICK: Yeah. But the thing is there are so many apartment complexes going up all over Stamford, Norwalk, New Haven, straight up the line on all of the commuter rails. And I'm assuming there some affordable housing mixed into all of them. And that's why they're doing it is because there has to be an incentive.

You don't spend \$24 million to build an apartment building without some incentive behind it. And I know BLT out of Stamford [Katerra's] building, you know, [Papa John], they're all building these massive buildings. We're putting roofs on them for them. But there's a lot of housing going up and they're not fully occupied. If I had to say they're probably 60% occupied from what I can see looking at these buildings right now.

So I don't know, you know, unless you're looking at single family homes for that number, but you're not looking at all these new units that just went up along the shoreline in Stamford, New Haven and all these different, you know, residents that have put up these multi-family units.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Mr. Warchick, I would just hesitantly suggest. I'm pretty confident in my numbers. And I do take into account the development that's happened in the cities. In fact almost all of the developments at our expected occupancy levels, but at this point in time, the construction life cycle I've talked to an extraordinary numbers of

people who've thought about developing even broader than Stamford, Norwalk, Bridgeport, and New Haven.

But sadly, those are the only communities that have been open to meeting the residential demands that we have in our state. And thankfully those four communities particularly have taken advantage of the multi-billion dollar state asset that we continue to fund on a year by year basis. And I think we're in a, we're at a good space because of those towns recognizing the demand, recognizing the investment the state has made in those communities and building housing for all. And I think we'll have a good conversation moving forward in this Committee. Thank you, Mr. Warchick.

EDMOND WARCHICK: Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): We have Mary Ann Turner followed by Nicole Paquette and that would exhaust those who've signed up for the public hearing. And last phone call I called earlier and were not available, have jumped back on. So we have Mary Ann Turner followed by Nicole Paquette. Is Mary Ann here?

MAARY ANN TURNER: Can you hear me now?

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Hi, Mari Ann. How are you? Good to see you today.

MARY ANN TURNER: I'm fine thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Welcome to the transportation public hearing Committee.

MARY ANN TURNER: Good. I'm in the right place. Okay. Before we start the last comment that you made Representative was about those other cities have been open to housing ideas and to build apartments and stuff and multi housing. If you got builders who are looking to do projects and they just ran out of cities, tell them to come on up to Enfield because we're ready.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Sounds good.

MARY ANN TURNER: Okay. But I am against this Bill. I'm not against building. So I'm writing an opposition of the Bill 6570 I'm a 14 year member of the zoning board of appeals. I am not here to seeding speaking on their behalf nor the economic development that I also sit on. I'm speaking for myself.

We take pride in being an open community here in Enfield, and we have many different housing stacks and our zoning rules are more than adequate to do that. Our current planning and zoning commission has taken a note on enormous amount of time, revising and putting into place rules that will allow and strengthen the Enfield community regarding housing and multi-use regulations.

We just finished putting in our TIF and we just finished putting in a regulation changes in what we call the Thompson Ville area. It's an overlay district up here, which is where our train station is going to be. And we have put in. We put the overlay district in our transit area to encourage all types of growth. This one size fits all regulation. Being proposed is not necessarily it's not necessary. And it's, ill-advised when it comes to Enfield. When government makes a land grab, as this legislation is requiring, we do not end up with great outcomes. And I'm going to use the example of urban renewal that happened in the 1970s.

That exactly is what destroyed many towns in Connecticut. And I can speak specifically to Enfield and Windsor Locks. It decimated our downtowns. We, there was never a plan to renew anything. It was a clear money grab. And the 6570 is no more than another experiment to do the same. But clearly was the outcome of the 1970 government or intervention should have been urban destruction because in Enfield and Windsor Locks, you will find the heavy

lifting being done today will bring back to bring back our towns is probably more than 60 years in the making.

Both towns have worked on a variety of projects, such as removing antiquated buildings, opening up for more opportunities. We rewrote the zoning rules to encourage new business and housing money has been earmarked, saved, and grants have been received for such projects by the people who know their towns best us. The residents.

This Bill, you propose will not take into consideration our Enfield personality are reasons for parking requirements, the ability to expand in areas that would be perfect fit, but your Bill will impede our historic district because of the size of the area that you're saying we need to encompass.

This is running-- This will roll in the areas charm and beauty and forever change the landscape of Enfield. And it's another destruct detecting your Billable, allowed removal of buildings and rebuilding in areas that do not offer the best location, but we will not be given a choice because you don't know Enfield like we do. This Bill doesn't fix problems such as runoff or lack coverage or neighboring properties. It exasperates it. Why does a group out of Hartford know what's best for Enfield? My opinion, they don't, they don't care like I care about my community and you want Connecticut to be great again, then let's be part of the solution to fix what is broken, but leave what isn't alone.

Put our energies into revitalizing our cities where adequate housing stock and public transportation infrastructure already exists, but it needs to have a facelift and an upgrade. And maybe we need to have people who are more focused on those things in a larger city that may at this point not be doing it. So the HB 6570 will not rebuild the community like Enfield. It'll only help destroy us. And right now

off my copy is we have a very large parcel right in the center of our town and like many other towns in Connecticut who have large malls, our square is pretty much empty. It's an antiquated, large concrete slab. And that is a perfect location for multi-use community, with housing and sports facilities and all kinds of things. And we in, Enfield are making a very conscious effort to make sure that we-

JOE PERKUS: I hate to interrupt, you're reaching the end of your three minutes. If you could please just wrap up.

MARY ANN TURNER: Thank you. And we are doing our best to make sure that we're giving opportunities to people to come to Enfield to build. So if you have people looking to build, please have them call us.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Ms. Turner for your testimony today and for hanging with us, do most of the morning and afternoon at this point. Thank you for your update on Enfield. In fact, I think Enfield would be perfectly compliant with the Bill as drafted more than 50% of the land within a half a mile of the train station is open to multifamily housing.

So I think Enfield would certainly not be destroyed would actually be the model for what we'd hope to do in a lot of other communities. And the work that has been that's happened in field is really to be commended. It really has been, I know it's been a long and exhaustive process for I'm sure you and many others to try and think through how to bring back that robust city that we know is there, we know the bones of the robust city are still there. And when I travel up on, fast-track see the bones of robust, that knees up and down the corridor. And I, and I know we want the same thing for your, for your city, right? Like we want to return to that job. [inaudible] robustness, I knew all destroyed in my community and in yours.

I think that's what we're trying to do by trying to provide some guidance on how to revitalize throughout the state around these transit assets. And we may disagree on some of the components of this Bill, but I think we have the same thing in mind at the end. And I'm willing to work with you and a lot of folks on this Committee to get us there. And I appreciate your testimony, Ms. Turner.

MARY ANN TURNER: Just to follow up on your last comments Enfield will have its train station stuff probably by next year.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Yep.

MARY ANN TURNER: But I'm very concerned that the circle that you're encompassing will really harm certain areas of our town. It's too big. It's not focused enough. And that's where I'm very concerned of like, you know make sure that the Bill, maybe you need to be a little more pinpointed and maybe we need to let Enfield guide you to the ideas that will make Enfield better and great. Not just better. We're already better.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Ms. Turner. Representative O'Dea, followed by Representative Zawistowski.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I just want to say thank you Ms. Turner. I agree a hundred percent with your comments. My town that I grew up in called Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania was a more of a rural area outside Philadelphia and without proper zoning regulations, it's now a sprawl of strip malls that is so depressing and unfortunate it pains me to go back. But in any event, I just want to thank you for your testimony. And I promise to try and work with you and take your words to heart and work in a bipartisan Bill that we can support. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Representative Zawistowski.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Very good to see you here. Mary Ann Enfield really has come very far over the past decade or so it's up in my neck of the woods, so I've I get there a lot. My mother used to live there. So I know that the you mentioned-- Mr. Chairman mentioned how good and field is and what a model it could be for the rest of the state and everything, which is great, but isn't it true, Mary Ann that he just also told you that you need to follow his rules or the rules of the Bill?

MARY ANN TURNER: Representative Zawistowski, I think he may have leaned in that direction, but I surely hope that that's not we'll end up. I know that Enfield has worked hard to put zoning rules in for multi-use. And I don't really think that I need Hartford or our town needs Harford to come in and do it for us.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): And I think the work that you've done should be recognized. And I think the other time is that the state doesn't need to lean on people that are doing things right. And what you said about the circle being too big. I brought up, I think it was probably very early, probably about seven, eight hours ago that that circle includes a portion of Suffield across the Connecticut river. And that whole area that it would affect is mainly preserved farmland and probably some single family homes. So, and it's across the river. There's no really there's a bridge there, but it's not going to do a whole lot of good to put multifamily housing in that location.

MARY ANN TURNER: And also keep in mind, it's also going to suck in part of Windsor Locks. In Windsor Locks they could go all the way from their main street, which they're doing a remarkable work. They're heading in a very Renaissance way to almost if not their whole town and it's not who they are.

And I grew up in Windsor Locks. That's why I speak on that subject. I'm not speaking for them, but it's just from my having lived there. My childhood.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Do you think that if the train stations like the one in Enfield that's coming up or other new multi-billion dollar projects involving train stations are built, what would it be your opinion that the market could make this work without being pushed by the state?

MARY ANNY TURNER: I absolutely know it can, because my town has already worked really hard. I heard earlier today and I have been on this call since 10:00 AM, and I heard your comments earlier, Representative Zawistowski, and we're going to have a bus terminal and parking when we have our transits, we're going to be multimodal.

And we're going to make sure that we open up part of the river and have access there. We've got buildings that we're looking at selling so that they could go to have shops and apartments. I mean, we're working really hard. So if there, that's why I said, if there are builders out there who are on this call, who are interested in some multi-use come see us, come see us, but please, this cannot end up in our historic district. You'll destroy it. It will destroy it.

And the thing is, I know from experience that there are people who have gone in and purchased homes to tear them down so that they could do some other type of development and it's there, right. But I don't need that to be the right with this Bill to come in and take one of those old historic homes. Now, tear it down and build a multi housing project that doesn't need to be there. That's what I'm worried about.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): And it's a very legitimate worry. I mean, that area has some real potential and

it just, it needs to be done. It needs to be curated on a local level.

MARY ANN TURNER: That's correct. And that's why I'm here. And I sat through and waited.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): And thank you very much for your patience. I wanted, I was glad to see somebody here from the Northern part of the state as well. And we've been talking about Fairfield county in New Haven pretty much all day. So this is very refreshing and it's nice to know when people are recognized for doing things right.

MARY ANN TURNER: Thank you very much.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Thank you for coming in and thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you. And again I hope that I did recognize you for doing what's right. Actually Enfield would be perfectly compliant with this Bill under the standard, because Enfield has done all of the work that we want more than 50% of the area around the train station is allowed. It does allow for multifamily housing which is what this Bill envisions in that construct. That being said, Representative Smith has a few questions and then believe we're on to the last two speakers of the evening. Representative Smith.

REP. SMITH (48TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mary Ann for your testimony. I grew up in Enfield, so I want to thank you for the good work that you're doing there. And I have not to be honest with you. Since my mom passed away, all my brothers still up there, certainly in the last year I've been up there. And so I haven't paid too close attention to the location of the train stations. I'm looking at an article from the journal inquire. It's going to be on River road, is it?

MARY ANN TURNER: Yes. I think it might be. Yes, it's river road. It's actually right behind the big old commons apartments.

REP. SMITH (48TH): Oh, Okay. All right. So, okay. Now I got you so dumb behind, like where the mill pond is and all that.

MARY ANN TURNER: Right back, right behind where the big-- where they turned them all into apartments, and they're actually a very good partner with us.

REP. SMITH (48TH): All right. Great. Well, that is a definitely, I mean to echo chairman Lemar, there's certainly no lack of housing down that part of town and I'm sure it'll be a great asset. That was my only question. I just want to make sure what the geography was. So I appreciate that. Thank you, Mr. Chair for indulging me. Thank you, Mary Ann.

MARY ANN TURNER: Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Of course. Thank you Mary Ann so much for your time today and this evening. And I look forward to reaching out to you soon. Talk to you more. I have Mary Ann Turner, and then I'm sorry we have Nicole Paquette and then Lauren Biller has rejoined us.

NICOLE PAQUETTE: Good evening, Representative Lemar, Senator Somers, Representative Carney, and the distinguished members of the Transportation Committee. My name is Nicole Paquette. I'm a licensed funeral director and the legislative co-chair of the Connecticut funeral directors association CFTA, which represents 220 funeral homes throughout the state. Thank you for your thoughtfulness and raising Senate Bill 982, and act revising motor vehicle statutes, which seeks to grant the right of way to a funeral procession found section 9.

Despite the good intentions of section 9, CFTA submits this testimony in opposition, funeral directors paramount concern of funeral processions is for the safety of the operators of motor vehicles, their passengers, and the public who encounter them. We believe that by requiring motor vehicle operators to obey existing traffic laws at all times provides for the greatest measure and preventing death, personal injury or property damage that may be suffered by any person in a funeral procession and to the public.

Stemming from these safety concerns arises liability issues that may be imposed upon funeral directors, funeral homes, their employees, or agents, such liability issues would negatively impact these individuals and the insolvencies of many Connecticut funeral homes.

Funeral processions proceed on roadways as a matter of courtesy extended by other motorists. Funeral home personnel promote the safe passage of processions with measures, such as instructional announcements of fixing funeral signage, or flags. We have fixed these two vehicles. We asked motorists to use lighted headlamps hazard signals, and to proceed at reduced rates.

Should a police escort be necessary, such a request in most cases is readily accommodated, still CFDA, further seeks avenues to create greater public awareness for funeral processions. With the increase in cremation services, the easily recognizable hearse is not necessarily part of the funeral procession once engaged and despite any number of the aforementioned safety measures employed, the procession still remains at the mercy of any imaginable external factors, hazards, driving behaviors, which include distracted under the influence and reckless driving and medical emergencies that face all motor vehicle operators today, risks of death, personal injury or property damage that result from a failure to grant the right

of way are irreplaceable or are too great of a loss for motorists passengers in the public to suffer, such losses outweigh the deterrent of an infraction violation describing lines 282 to 283.

With these considerations, the Connecticut funeral directors association asks the transport Transportation Committee to please continue to allow motor vehicle operators to obey all traffic laws at all times by removing section 9 of Senate Bill 982. Thank you for what you do. I make myself available to your questions or comments at this time or at the convenience of this Committee.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Ms. Paquette for your testimony today and for sticking with us throughout the morning afternoon, I'm not sure how long you've been here, but I do appreciate your willingness to join us this evening and making sure that we're hearing from you about your concerns with the Bill with this component of the Bill has been brought up. So it's greatly appreciated thank you for your testimony. Are there any questions for Ms. Paquette? Seeing none, we have your written testimony, it will be reviewed as part of our screening process to make sure we're accommodating and concerns that you have. Thank you again.

NICOLE PAQUETTE: Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Last but not least. We have Lauren Biller. Lauren, how are you today?

LAUREN BILLER: Hi, can you hear me?

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Oh, we can.

LAUREN BILLER: Okay. I'm not, I'm kind of new to the Zoom thing. So first of all, I give you guys so much credit for what you did all day today. I was on this morning and I heard some testimony up until probably about 12:30 and then I was off. So I hope I'm not repeating myself. I heard what so I'm on

here today participating for, to show my support for HB number 6566, an act concerning the safety of children purchasing frozen desserts from ice cream trucks.

This Bill was authored in memory of Tristin Barhorst which is my good friends, fun. Who tragically lost life. Just two months shy of his 11th birthday. Tristin was walking across the street after he had just purchased an ice cream cone from the ice cream trucks and a 17 year old driver who was inexperienced and probably speeding and he hit him and Tristin and died instantly.

So what they're looking for is to have signage put on ice cream trucks to give drivers a better warning that there could potentially be children out there. It's a slowdown and possibly stop. So this is a law that obviously I stand 100% behind. I heard Christi and Tyler speak this morning, and I think everyone was very moved by their speech. And it was really nice to see so many people on board to support that. And I really challenge everyone that has listened to them today to step up and really make sure that this Bill is passed and becomes a law. I think we owe it to children.

One thing that I'm not sure was touched on over the afternoon, but there are three other states that I know of California, New York and New Jersey that have similar laws currently, and these laws enacted by these three other states, they don't interfere with the rights of the ice cream vendors to sell their products, nor the flow of traffic. They very simply require ice cream trucks to install additional signage and lights and the drivers passing you know, to just temporarily yield or stop you know, briefly it's really a no brainer as far as I'm concerned. If it saves a life, then this is well worth. It's relatively cheap to install and we'd love to see it pass.

And so, you know, knowing that other states have this and currently right now, I think that we can learn from what works that they've been doing and hopefully implement it here in Connecticut. So yeah, I just stand behind this the families pushing this Bill forward, and I think that we should all do this for Tristin. Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Yes. Thank you, Ms. Biller for your testimony today and for joining us for a large portion of your Monday, the testimony you heard earlier today that we all heard was quite powerful and moving. And I think family members being with rely on friends and support networks like yourself to help make this case is, is really important. I appreciate your willingness to talk about what had to be a tragic loss for you and your community, but the family itself. And it's something we can work on preventing and create rules in Connecticut that make things a little bit safer.

And with that, I'm going to reach out to Representative Fishbein after the meeting tonight. And I've already reached out to Representative Carney and Senator Haskell. And I have talked about this. I think we're going to try to get this out of Committee as early as this week. I do think that this is something that naming the legislation might not be perfect right now. Bills don't have to be perfect when they come up for public hearing. There's a commitment that we have to work on, keep making them better, to look at other language that we may want to adopt. And I think we feel like we're in that spot based upon a lot of the testimony and support that the family had today. I think the Committee is in that place. I want to thank you for your role in getting this there.

LAUREN BILLER: I see that you're pushing this quickly and seeing the urgency and especially with, you know, the warm weather coming ahead, the fascia is that the past the better. And I, and I really

thank all of you for looking to see that she gets on so quickly.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Ms. Biller, are there any questions for Ms. Biller? Seeing none. Again thank you for your time and your testimony today.

LAUREN BILLER: Thank you. Thank you so much. Have a good night.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you. Mr. Clerk, or Mr. Assistant clerk. I believe that exhausts our public hearings sign up list for today.

JOE PERKUS: Yes, Mr. Chair. According to what I could see in front of me that does exhaust our list of all registered speakers, except a Representative O'Dea has his hand raised.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Representative O'Dea, how can I help you?

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Well, I owe the judiciary. Those of you that are on judiciary with me know that I owe you a pizza party because of the questioning I did at the recreational marijuana hearing. I feel I owe this Committee a pizza party as well for all my questioning. I do appreciate the chair's indulgence for the evening or the day and the evening. And I will, at some point in time, we're allowed to be treating for pizza, the cheapest I can find in the area. So thank you very much to everyone

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Representative O'Dea. I appreciate that, but if we're going to have a pizza party, it's going to be New Haven pizza and I'll bring it all right, Tom, I'll be over at eight for whatever you're having for dinner. So this concludes our public hearing for the evening.

I do want to make a point to note that the Transportation Committee will likely be having a Committee meeting this week, maybe as early as

Wednesday to review a few outstanding issues before the Committee potentially a vote to draft on the Bill and potentially the Bill we heard earlier today regarding protections around ice cream trucks. There are a few issues I think we can move relatively quickly.

I believe the obligation of this Committee to try and get as many things out the door that we know that we can work on together in a bipartisan way to reach a positive solution in the near future. And so Senator Haskell and I will be meeting early tomorrow. We'll be reaching out to Representative Carney and Senator Somers. So if you get a call from any one of the four of us tomorrow, it means we're trying to get some details on a Bill and trying to move it out as quickly as possible. So please pay attention to your emails as we and phone calls, as we try to organize this to move quickly as we can. With that Representative Carney, do you have any final words?

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Nope. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Senator Haskell. I hope your first Senate your first day as transportation chair for the Senate, that was up to your wishes. I

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Really enjoyed it. It was great to be with you all today and looking forward to seeing you again on Wednesday.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Perfect. With that seeing no other questions or anything before the Committee we close for the next public hearing and check your emails and we'll likely be back to Committee meeting on Wednesday. Thanks again.