

# **Housing Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT**

**Bill No.:** HB-5002

AN ACT CONCERNING HOUSING AND THE NEEDS OF HOMELESS

**Title:** PERSONS.

**Vote Date:** 3/6/2025

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 2/13/2025

**File No.:** 222

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Representative Matthew Ritter and Representative Jason Rojas

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

Currently, Connecticut is experiencing a housing crisis that is impacting nearly every resident in the state. It is estimated that Connecticut is short over 110,000 housing units, ranks almost last in the nation for housing construction, and is one of the country's most constrained real estate markets. The increasing age of our housing stock, both deed restricted and market rate, at rising prices further restricts the eligible buyer pool. This issue is compounded by a growing wait list for state and federal vouchers, however, those with vouchers are increasingly unable to find suitable units that meet their needs. Poignantly, homelessness in Connecticut increased 13% in 2024, and because shelters do not receive annualized state funding, they are unable to plan for future. The aim of this bill will be to address these challenges and more.

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

None expressed.

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

[Keith Ainsworth, Attorney at Law](#) – Keith Ainsworth supported the concept of this bill but opposed loosening environmental standards and rights as part of providing mechanisms for incentivizing affordable housing. Ainsworth stated that the “construction and building community are taking advantage of the legislature’s desire for affordable housing and using it as an opportunity to promote the gutting of environmental protections” through claims that

such protections stop affordable housing. Ainsworth suggested investment in transit-oriented communities as one way to promote positive development.

[Timothy Anop, Director of External Affairs, Yankee Institute](#) – Timothy Anop provided general comments on this bill. Anop asserted that state mandates and top-down regulations have failed to address Connecticut's housing crisis effectively. Anop instead suggested the state focus on removing artificial barriers to development and supporting local, market-driven approaches to increase affordable housing. Anop listed key reforms from their 2023 policy paper, "Failure by Mandate", to increase supply, lower costs, and provide stable, affordable housing for Connecticut residents. This includes allowing four-plex units in single-family zones, expanding access to accessory dwelling units, encouraging mixed-use development, eliminating costly regulations that drive up prices, and reforming house assistance to empower families, not developers.

[Lynn Arezzini, Chair of CT DDS Southern RAC, Mom of Autistic Son](#) – Lynn Arezzini supported this bill and shared a personal story regarding her 34-year-old son with autism who lives in an apartment with DDS and DSS supports. Arezzini suggested adding supportive housing to this bill because it would create integrated housing for ¼ the cost of group homes, use low-income housing tax credits, and would give people with autism the support to live independently and safely in the community. Arezzini included the description for Supportive Housing from the DDS website.

[Mark Asnes, Housing Provider, CMHA](#) – Mark Asnes supported this bill and shared their belief that Mobile Manufactured Housing is a big part of the solution to increase housing options. Asnes shared their thoughts on Mobile Manufactured Housing and the impediments in their way of building more, which included local zoning issues, environmental and infrastructure challenges, and bills introduced by the legislature.

[De'Andre Brown, Executive Director, Evolve Love/ BLM860](#) – De'Andre Brown supported this bill and shared their personal story of being homeless. Brown suggested additions that could improve this bill, including defined strategies and funding sources, incentives for affordable housing development, stronger tenant protections, expanding homeless support services, addressing barriers to homeownership, and requiring regular reporting and accountability.

[Kara Capone, CEO, Community Housing Advocates](#) – Kara Capone supported this bill and asked that it be amended so Connecticut can better target needed resources to LGBTQ youth. Capone shared data on LGBTQ youth and provided the suggested amended language.

[John Cho, Health Justice Praticum, Yale](#) – John Cho supported this bill and urged it be amended to include specific language supporting LGBTQ+ youth. Cho shared data on LGBTQ+ youth, stated that their research found that Connecticut does not currently collect data on LGBTQ+ youth in care, and provided the suggested amended language for this bill. Cho included their working paper titled, *Access to Housing for LGBTQ+ Youth Transitioning from State Care*, to support greater attention on housing for this community.

[Lucy Dathan, State Representative, CGA](#) – Lucy Dathan supported this bill and shared their experiences from 2023 working on HB5001, AAC Resources and Support Services for Persons with an Intellectual or Developmental Disability, where they spoke with families

whose loved ones were on waiting lists for support services, a key area being active residential needs. Dathan stated that “the waiting list for these services under DDS has grown from 549 to 594 individuals in September 2024” which does not account for people in the Autism Community, and “the waiting list for services on the Autism Waiver has been more than 2,000 for the last two years.” Dathan added that these housing opportunities are cost effective and can operate at about 25% to that of a group home and requested that the Housing Committee include Supportive Housing options for people with disabilities in this bill.

[Jessica Doll, Executive Director, CTAA](#) – Jessica Doll supported this bill and described the three major priorities that the Connecticut Apartment Association (CTAA) is pursuing: to help grow housing, protect apartment residents, and boost accountability for housing providers.

[Sarah Fox, CEO, CT Coalition To End Homelessness](#) – Sarah Fox supported this bill and urged it be amended to ensure that LGBTQIA+ youth are specifically included in the state’s efforts to address homelessness. Fox shared recent research on LGBTQIA+ youth experiencing homelessness and their unique barriers to accessing housing and services and provided language for their proposed amendment.

[Betsy Gara, Executive Director, COST](#) – Betsy Gara supported this bill and shared the ideas and initiatives that COST supports, which included: supporting continued investment in the state’s successful housing programs, encouraging innovative approaches to addressing housing needs, incentivizing transit-oriented development projects, promoting homeownership opportunities, assisting municipalities in addressing water and wastewater capacity, promoting responsible growth principles, supporting Connecticut’s rural communities, and updating the affordable housing appeals process.

[Sean Ghio, Policy Director, The Partnership for Strong Communities](#) – Sean Ghio supported this bill and stated that policies that expand the housing supply across all income levels, streamline development processes, and invest in affordable housing solutions must be prioritized. Ghio shared data on the housing availability and costs in Connecticut and how it has “unveiled an alarming racial equity gap” with households identifying as Black or African American having just a 41% homeownership rate compared to the 73% for White households. Ghio described the four areas that their policy prioritizes, which includes housing affordability, housing creation, housing choice, and housing stability.

[Kally Moquete Esq., Senior Manager of Policy, Health Equity Solutions](#) – Kally Moquete supported this bill and stated that research has consistently shown that individuals experiencing homelessness are at a higher risk for chronic health conditions, infectious diseases, and mental health challenges. Moquete shared data showing that Black and Hispanic populations are disproportionately affected by homelessness in Connecticut, along with data on homelessness in Connecticut in general. They listed the key benefits of the bill, which includes lowering housing costs, expanding housing options, and supporting homeless populations, and limitations of the bill, which includes a lack of specific funding mechanisms, an absence of clear implementation strategies, and no measurable benchmarks for evaluating support for homeless individuals. They listed their suggested recommendations for the limitations, which includes earmarking state funds and exploring federal and other grant opportunities to endure effective implementation, establishing a statewide task force to oversee and guide implementation, and including quantifiable goals in the bill.

[Michelle Noehren](#): Michelle Noehren expressed support for this bill believing that it offered a long-term solution to the housing crisis by creating an economically stable environment for “all walks of life”.

[Judith Osowiecki, Resident, Moosup CT](#): Judith Osowiecki supported the bill expressed concern for her relationship son with Down Syndrome who, “greatly benefits from supportive housing”. Supportive housing is for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities that combines rental assistance with support from a qualified provider in an apartment setting. Osowiecki detailed the benefits in this bill that target affordable housing availability for all, including that, “most if not all additional units [of supportive housing] are for low-income individuals and families”. Osowiecki plead with legislators to pass this bill that would not only ensure her son’s housing after her passing but would also promote the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit and additional affordable housing.

[Werner Oyanadel, Policy Director, The Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity, and Opportunity](#): Werner Oyanadel testified in support of the bill. They stated the housing crisis is an issue that "requires a comprehensive, inclusive, and collaborative approach" to solve. Furthermore, Oyanadel expressed this issue involves many forms of socioeconomic divisions, and this bill can be a significant step towards managing the housing crisis as well as the disparate impact on low-income residents in Connecticut. Oyanadel offered considerable data to support their position while outlining policy they believe could be effective: community land trusts, revolving housing production loan funds, and expanding Connecticut’s Time to Own program.

[Jim Perras, CEO, Home Builders & Remodelers Association of Connecticut, Inc.](#): Jim Perras testified in support of this bill. Perras began by explaining the state of Connecticut’s housing stock, detailing its age, low vacancy rate, and the thousands of needed units. Perras expressed that Connecticut’s housing crisis is fixable if we address the hardships for residential construction workers, such as improving land use, enhancing financial options, and developing the needed construction workforce. Addressing these challenges and others will contribute to the bill’s overall goal of improving housing in Connecticut.

[Lauren Pittman, Member, Compass Community Advisory Board](#): Lauren Pittman supported this bill from a first-hand witness to the effects of homelessness both on the individual and societal level. Further she stated that homelessness leads to other societal divisions, and it is the legislation responsibility to "prevent human suffering", potential emergency interventions, and further uphold the human right to a stable home. She finalized with the support that this bill solves these issues that are a result from unaffordable housing.

[Larry Rizzolo, Member, Guilford's Planning and Zoning Commission](#): Larry Rizzolo shared his support for this bill by providing in-depth background of the issues this bill attempts to address. Rizzolo described that due to zoning restrictions, developers are less likely to build affordable homes, however, this bill may allow for the lowered cost of building a home, furthermore, solving socioeconomic issues in his localized area. In discussion of the goals of this bill, Rizzolo offers insightful evidence addressing why this and other bills support developers and provide for the communities who participate in low-income economies.

[Alex Rodriquez, Environmental Justice Specialist, Save the Sound and Chase Lindemann, Legal Fellow, Save the Sound](#): Alex Rodriquez and Chase Lindemann supported this bill. They

noted the housing opportunities provided in this bill have good intentions, however, there is significant need for more "resilient development" of housing. This resilient housing includes housing that is more environmentally friendly and offers fewer urban elements but is still affordable to low-income residences. Rodriguez and Lindemann hoped this bill will move towards their end goal of eco-friendly communities that solve the income inequality.

[Varian Salters](#): Varian Salters supported this bill with their own personal experience as someone with developmental disabilities and desire to live independently. Salters believed these housing opportunities allowed for the reduction of long-term care, integrated communities for these individuals, and are proven to be inexpensive.

[Lillian Sarju, Policy and Outreach Coordinator, CT League of Conservation Voters](#): Lillian Sarju expressed the clear commitment to protecting Connecticut's environment, lowering the carbon footprint, and improving the standard of living for all residents. Furthermore, Sarju stated there are individuals suffering from the higher cost of living and taking the initiative to improve housing and environmental justice. Strategies like transit-oriented communities or TOCs are modern and effective methods of planning.

[Maura Satti, Therapist, Mindful Pathways Counseling, LLC](#): Maura Satti shared support of this bill as it would expand the resources of individuals with mental and developmental disabilities whom they counsel as a therapist. Satti has witnessed the benefits of supportive housing, particularly how it allows independent living and reduces long-term institutions while allowing for naturally integrated communities.

[Denise Savageau](#): Denise Savageau supported the bill having a background in environmental planning and offered some comments. Savageau commented that to assist with affordable housing the state should align environmental and housing justice methods and change land use regulations. Some suggestions included: increasing public financing for public housing, incentivizing public-private partnerships for housing, creating opportunities for socially responsible investing, embracing community land trusts, creating benefit corporations that focus on affordable housing, and including environmental planners in these endeavors.

[Carol Scully, Director of Advocacy, The Arc of Connecticut, Inc.](#): Carol Scully shared her support for the bill, as the director of advocacy they have had the opportunity to work with individuals who experience developmental disabilities. Scully shared that independent living offers a natural and more integrated community for these individuals. To ensure these communities can be established, Scully cited "low fare" transportation as one of the key factors that supports this housing alternative. Scully concluded hoping this bill will provide affordable and supportive housing to address the inflated cost of living.

[Kathleen Stauffer, CEO, Arc Eastern Connecticut](#): Kathleen Stauffer supported this bill and would like to include supportive housing that can create jobs and is beneficial to taxpayers. Stauffer stated that this supportive housing addition is our responsibility as a state, and should be included in this bill.

[Melanie Strout, Community Engagement Manager, School and State Finance Project](#): Melanie Strout supported this bill by described the disadvantages students face because education funding is tied to local taxes. Additionally, Strout noted that stable home life is linked to student success.

The following testimony expressed support for this bill to include housing provisions for the Intellectually and Developmentally Disabled community:

[Laura Beaton](#)

[Collette Bement](#)

[Joanne Brazalovich](#)

[Anne Corbosiero](#)

[Dawn Cyr, Day Services Manager, FAVARH](#)

[Jane Fernald](#)

[Mary Lou Freitas](#)

[Walter Glomb, Executive Director, CT Council on DD](#)

[Sue Guiher](#)

[Donna Hill](#)

[Jill I](#)

[Doug Kafka](#)

[Eric Kessler, FAVAR](#)

[Corinne Kravetz](#)

[Randi Leopold](#)

[Karen Linder](#)

[Kim Little](#)

[Susan Lucek](#)

[Angela Martin, Content Strategist, AllWorkCT](#)

[Sean McCarthy, Development Director, Favarh](#)

[Shanon McCormick, Executive Director, Down Syndrome Association of CT](#)

[Scott Morrison](#)

[Penny Phillips, Marketing Director, The Arc of the Farmington Valley](#)

[Imelda Reno, Resident of Canton, Connecticut](#)

[Augusto Russell, Resident of Farmington, Connecticut](#)

[John Sahlman](#)

[Richard Sambrook, Father](#)

[Roseann Scala, Case Manager, Columbus House](#)

[Kyra Sheehan, Resident of Canton, Connecticut](#)

[Rebecca Shinkoff](#)

[Patti Silva, Resident of Wethersfield, Connecticut](#)

[Marlene Snecinski, ILST/DSP, FAVARH](#)

[Chris Straus, Resident of Canton, Connecticut](#)

[Ian Straus, Resident of Glastonbury, Connecticut](#)

[Margaret Straus, Resident of Farmington, Connecticut](#)

[Nathaniel Straus, Resident of Farmington, Connecticut](#)

[Kathryn Strout](#)

[Fran Traceski, Resident of Canton, Connecticut](#)

[Anne Treimanis, Attorney-Law Office Anne Treimanis](#)

[Michael Wadlinger, Resident of West Simsbury, Connecticut](#)

[Tom Wegner, Resident of Bristol, Connecticut](#)

[Valerie Wiseman, Resident of Avon, Connecticut](#)

The following testimonies expressed general support of the bill:

[Allen Alderfer, Rapid Rehousing Case Manager, New Reach Inc.](#)

[Christian Allyn](#)

[Liza Andrews, VP of Govt, Public Relations, CCADV](#)  
[Anonymous](#)  
[Nicole Arel, LMSW](#)  
[Ariana Azarbad](#)  
[Kevin Banach](#)  
[Tobian Banton, Career Development Coordinator, Journey Home](#)  
[Robert Beech, MD, Yale University](#)  
[Martin Buccolo, Board Member, Open Doors](#)  
[Thomas Burr, Public Policy Manager, NAMI Connecticut Inc.](#)  
[Benjamin Candea](#)  
[Liza Carey, Open Doors](#)  
[Lisa Cesario, Communications Specialist, Columbus House, Inc.](#)  
[Alicea Charamut, Executive Director, Rivers Alliance of Connecticut](#)  
[Victoria Como](#)  
[Wendy Cusick, Nurse HIV Sexual Health, Fair Haven Community Healthcare](#)  
[Bradford Czepiel](#)  
[Leila Davis](#)  
[Jennifer Dayton, Director of Board of Directors, League of Women Voters of CT](#)  
[Peter DeMallie, President & CEO, Design Professionals, Inc.](#)  
[Barbara Denehy](#)  
[Jacquelyn Eaton](#)  
[Therese Eke, All In For Milford](#)  
[Kenia Feliz, Housing Engagement Coordinator, Journey Home](#)  
[Kelly Fitzgerald, VP of Economic Mobility, United Way of Greater New Haven](#)  
[Heather Foster, Program Director, Center For Human Development](#)  
[Dale Fredston, Director, Homes with Hope](#)  
[Christopher Freimuth, Director, CF Gardens](#)  
[Dr. Jenna Gage](#)  
[Elizabeth Hogan](#)  
[Kim Jakowski, Director of Housing, WRCC](#)  
[Melora Johnson, Open Doors](#)  
[Joshua Kelly, CEO, TVCCA Inc.](#)  
[Becky Kessler, Community Engagement Coordinator, CCEEJ](#)  
[Mary Lee Kiernan, President and CEO, YWCA Greenwich](#)  
[Sheryl Knapp](#)  
[Elizabeth Langhorne](#)  
[Michelle Lipar, Coordinator, A Hand Up, Journey Home](#)  
[Agustin Lopez, Mental Health Connecticut](#)  
[Nadine Malone, CAN Manager, Journey Home](#)  
[Elaine Matt, Senior Admin Housing Specialist, BHcare Inc](#)  
[Shirley McCarthy, Professor, Yale Medicine](#)  
[Isabel McEachern](#)  
[Cathleen Meaden, Chief Operating Officer, Columbus House Inc.](#)  
[Rachel Merva, Director, Beth El Center](#)  
[Mag Morelli, President, LeadingAge Connecticut](#)  
[Liam Nangle, Resident of Bloomfield, CT](#)  
[Monika Nugent, Public Policy Associate, The Alliance](#)  
[Aleksander Papaluca, First Housing Case Manager, Beth-El Center](#)  
[Jaime Parker, Project Manager, Eastern CAN](#)

[Louis Pepe, Resident of Simsbury, Connecticut](#)  
[Amanda Perna](#)  
[Jim Pettinelli, Executive Director, Liberty Community Services](#)  
[Raphael Podolsky, Legal Counsel, Connecticut Legal Services](#)  
[Linda Rammler, Volunteer Advisor/Staff Support, People First of CT](#)  
[Sarah Riley, Psychiatrist, Yale University](#)  
[Kresten Rivas, President of Board of Directors, New Doors](#)  
[Caitlin Rose, CEO, Friendship Service Center](#)  
[Sabin, Eli, Legislative Coordinator, CT Voices for Children](#)  
[Sara Salomons Wilson, Deputy Director, Journey Home](#)  
[Dan Santorso, Executive Assistant, FISH / Friends in Service to Humanity of Northwestern Connecticut](#)  
[Senecal, Chris, Sr Public Policy Officer, Hartford Foundation](#)  
[Irene Skrybailo](#)  
[Hannah Smith, Director of Shelter Services, Beth-El Centre](#)  
[Vernita Tertullian, Member of the Board, Open Doors](#)  
[Jossie Torres Resident of Bristol, Connecticut](#)  
[Stacey Violante Cote, Deputy Director, Center for Children's Advocacy](#)  
[Sarah Webster, Director of Human Resources](#)  
[Kathrine Weldy, Senior Program Director, Housing with Hope](#)  
[Jess Zaccagnino, Policy Counsel, The American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut \(ACLU-CT\)](#)  
[Shalyn Zappulla, Resident of Connecticut](#)

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

[John Souza, President, CT Coalition of Property Owners \(CCOPO\):](#) John Souza noted there is vague, limited, or no language underneath subtitles and suggested review by the committee leadership.

[Maria Weingarten, Founder, CT169Strong:](#) Maria Weingarten wrote in opposition to the nature of the 'dummy bill' that is intentionally vague to avoid controversial public hearings. Weingarten asked for a more transparent relationship between the legislature and the public. Some suggestions Weingarten offered for the bill included: entirely eliminate the use of State Median Income and only use Area Median Income, minimize overreach from the state by empowering local control over housing production, purchase current at market housing and offer it out as deed restricted, expand the 8-30g Housing Unit Equivalent points for municipalities to reach their affordable housing quotas, reform the 8-30g formula, and reform housing voucher programs, among others.

The following testimonies expressed general opposition to the bill:

[Linda Dalessio](#)  
[Heather Kilpatrick](#)  
[Shelley Michelson](#)

**Reported by:** Arianna Tsikitas, Clerk  
Jasmine Jones, Assistant Clerk  
Alexandra Hehn, CGA Intern

**Date:** 3/25/2025