

Housing Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-7112

AN ACT CONCERNING HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS AND THE RENTAL

Title: ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

Vote Date: 3/6/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/4/2025

File No.: 274

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Housing Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill addresses a wide swath of housing related issues. Sections address the majority leader's roundtable, a housing opportunity tax credit task force, sewer planning and a related grant program, reductions in lot size requirements for local zoning, banning hostile architecture, collecting data on LGBTQ+ young adults, a DOH administered program to provide grants to municipal housing authorities that offer a housing choice voucher homeownership program, additional Community Investment Fund bonding, a CHFA middle housing development grant pilot program, a DSS program to provide portable showers and laundry facilities for the homeless, for a pilot program offering direct cash rental assistance to 150 applicants, and items concerning appropriations to DSS and DOH. Each of these sections will address a critical component of Connecticut's housing crisis.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Andrea Barton Reeves, Commissioner, Department of Social Services](#) – Commissioner Andrea Barton Reeves opposed this bill because DSS is not the appropriate subject matter expert for developing and administering the pilot program to provide portable showers and laundry facilities to those experiencing homelessness. Barton Reeves explained they lack the expertise associated with homelessness and instead the Department of Housing (DOH) should facilitate this and like programs. Barton Reeves added that DSS could not support section 20 of the bill which "appropriates funding from the General Fund to provide grant-in-aid to local food pantries for the purpose of matching funds provided to such food pantries by municipalities" because they do not know the total number of food pantries in the state, the amount of funding needed to match funds provided by municipalities would be significant,

and would place an administrative burden on DSS to contract, distribute, and monitor the funding to pantries.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Error! Hyperlink reference not valid. – Representative Jason Rojas supported this bill and listed suggestions for Section 13. Suggestions included automatic bonding of \$50 million to public housing authorities through CHFA, to announce a Notice of Funding Availability to the eligible applicants so they can submit proposals that emphasize the construction of middle housing developments and include incentives for communities without or with a modest public housing authority to partner with a public housing authority from another community to assist with development. With these additions, Rojas believed Connecticut can provide necessary assistance for lower-income housing.

[Geoff Luxenberg, State Representative](#) – Representative Geoff Luxenberg supported this bill and focused their testimony on section 1 and their idea titled "PROPEL CT" or "Providing Real Opportunity Purchasing Existing Listings in CT." Luxenberg listed supporting reasons for this idea, explained how it would work, and described its potential effectiveness.

[Raphael Podolsky, Attorney and Policy Advocate, Connecticut Legal Services](#) – Raphael Podolsky supported this bill with some requested changes. Podolsky supported several initiatives, including tax credit programs, studies through the Majority Leaders' Roundtable, and a CHFA middle housing grant program, among others. Podolsky added comments about two sections of the bill, section 8 on the Rental Assistance Program (RAP) and sections 16 and 19 on cash rent subsidies. Podolsky asked for lines 360-363 in section 8 to be deleted because it, "can create substantial problems for the tenant if in fact the landlord fails to comply with reinspection and final subsidy approval is not given", and for lines 325-344 to be reviewed to, "make sure that the formula will allow MARs to be set sufficiently high so that RAP participants will have adequate housing availability, both in core urban zip code areas and in suburban zip code areas." Podolsky also asked that language be added to section 16f to "require that tenants be adequately informed of the risks of not waiting for a Section 8 voucher that the statute provide that (1) tenants can return to the Section 8 waiting list at any time and (2) they will be restored to the waiting list at their old place on the list."

[Hugh Bailey, Policy Director, Open Communities Alliance](#) – Hugh Bailey supported all provisions of the bill except allowing self-certification by landlords; Bailey feared it would not be in the best interest of tenants and could be ripe for abuse. Bailey endorsed two specific sections of the bill, its provisions of wastewater treatment and the prohibition of lot sizes greater than one acre for residential construction.

[Jim Perras, CEO, HBRA of CT](#) – Jim Perras supported this bill and discussed the urgency of Connecticut's housing shortage with data. Perras listed and expanded on key provisions that support housing growth, like expanding infrastructure to support housing development, encouraging middle housing development, reducing barriers to multi-family housing, and improving rental assistance and housing accessibility. Perras stated that "increased housing development has a direct economic impact, benefitting workers, businesses, and communities" and concluded that this bill will increase housing production, improve affordability, and support economic growth while maintaining thoughtful environmental and zoning protections.

[Chelsea Ross, Executive Director, The Partnership, PSC](#) – Chelsea Ross supported this bill and suggested amending the membership of the majority leaders' roundtable in P.A. 23-207 Section 36(b) to "include a member with expertise in affordable housing development through experience with community development corporations, a member from a community development finance institution, and a member with homeless services system expertise."

[William Marut, Partnership For Strong Communities](#) – William Marut supported this bill and shared data on LGBTQ+ youth, stating that "28% of LGBTQ youth have experienced homelessness or housing instability...23% of trans young adults aged 18-25 have experienced homelessness compared to the 12.5% of their peers, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development estimates that at least 20% of homeless youth identify as LGBTQ+, with some studies suggesting that that might be closer to 40%." Marut acknowledged that despite these statistics, Connecticut lacks a state requirement to collect and report sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) data for LGBTQ+ youth receiving services. Marut suggested Connecticut follow states like Vermont and New York who utilize similar data collection and pass this bill "to ensure that all young people, regardless of identity, receive the support they need."

[Gustave Keach, President CEO, The Towers at Tower Lane](#) – Gustave Keach supported this bill and asked for it to include specific housing provisions targeted to seniors with incomes between 51-120% Area Median Income (AMI). They need support and care services local nonprofit providers could provide to this "Missing Middle" cohort. Keach asked that section 13 of the bill not be limited to housing authorities and include local nonprofits, enabling providers like The Towers to develop middle housing with services targeted at the "Missing Middle."

The following testimonies expressed support of the bill:

[Paul Boudreau, President Hamden Tenants Union](#)

[John Cho](#)

[Aditi D](#)

[Sarah Fox, CEO, CT Coalition to End Homelessness](#)

[James Horan, Senior Executive Director, LISC Connecticut](#)

[Jeanne Milstein, Co-Convener, NL Human Services Network](#)

[Mag Morelli, President, LeadingAge Connecticut](#)

[Patrick McKenna, North Hartford Partnership](#)

[Campbell Mitchell, Yale School of Public Health](#)

[Werner Oyanadel, Policy Director, CWCSEO](#)

[Rob Rosenthal, Andrus Professor of Sociology, Wesleyan University Eli Sabin, Legislative Coordinator, CT Voices for Children](#)

[Mallory Sanchez, Staff Attorney, Center for Children's Advocacy](#)

[Chris Senecal, Sr Public Policy Officer, Hartford Foundation](#)

[Sana Shah, Director of Policy and Advocacy, The CT Project Action Fund](#)

[Jess Zaccagnino, Policy Counsel, ACLU CT](#)

[Lauren Tagliatela, GRC Co-Chair, CTAA](#)

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

[Francis Pickering, Executive Director, WestCOG](#) – Francis Pickering opposed this bill. Despite supporting provisions that enhance infrastructure, provide financial assistance, and improve housing access, Pickering opposed other elements of the bill. The elements that Pickering opposed include statewide prohibition on lot sizes greater than one acre (Section 4), mandatory project labor agreements (Section 12), and ban on hostile architecture (Section 5).

[John Hair](#) – John Hair opposed this bill and cited WestCOG's Buildable Square Concept as a better alternative. Hair stated that environmental research indicates a two-acre minimum is generally necessary to ensure a safe and effective septic operation and "inadequately sized lots increase the likelihood of system failures, leading to groundwater contamination and costly repairs." Hair suggested instead of a one-size-fits-all policy, municipalities should be encouraged to adopt regulatory practices that "calibrate development approval to the actual carrying capacity of each district or lot."

[Maria Weingarten, Cofounder, CT169Strong](#): Maria Weingarten provided comments in opposition to the bill. Specifically, Weingarten voiced opposition to section three that mandates reports on sewer infrastructure to service multifamily housing, section four that restricts local zoning control on density and lot sizes, section five which bans hostile architecture, and section twelve that mandates project labor agreements. Weingarten additionally offered suggestions for alternative policies and urged the committee not to undermine local zoning authority,

The following testimonies expressed general opposition to the bill:

[Kirk Carr](#)

[Nora Maloney](#)

**Reported by: Arianna Tsikitas, Clerk
Jasmine Jones, Assistant Clerk**

Date: 3/27/2025