

TESTIMONY OF MARK DUBOIS ON H.B. 7297  
March 22, 2017

Good Morning, Chairs & Ranking Members, and members of the Planning and Development Committee. My name is Mark Dubois, and I live in Haddam, Connecticut. I am writing to you today to express my ardent support for H.B. 7297 and the private right of action concerning housing discrimination that this bill creates.

I have been a lawyer, in both the private and public sector, for almost 40 years. I am a former President of the Connecticut Bar Association. I am a lifelong resident of Connecticut and was born in Hartford. I am a former Second Selectman of Haddam where I live now. I also live part time in Provincetown Massachusetts in a mixed income condominium which includes a strong component of affordable housing.

I wish to make three simple points:

First, it saddens me that my former neighborhood in Hartford, Frog Hollow, has gone from a vibrant mixed community to a dangerous place in a single generation and I fear that part of that has been caused by discriminatory housing practices which limit options for many, forcing them together into segregated neighborhoods.

Second, from personal experience I can tell you that the best communities I have lived in are ones where there is diversity on all relevant metrics, including income, racial and ethnic markers and gender expression.

Finally, I firmly believe that people should have the ability to invoke the power of the courts to remedy discrimination in any and all forms. Government has limited resources and cannot address all of the wrongs its citizens suffer from. An empowered citizenry can fill the gap using private rights of action.

I urge you to act favorably on H.B. 7297.