

Testimony of Danaisha Ross in Support of H.B. 7297
Before the Planning & Development Committee of the Connecticut Legislature
Wednesday, March 22, 2017

My Name is Danaisha Ross, and I am a current resident and registered voter of Harford, CT. I am writing to express my support for H.B. 7297, and the increased access to affordable housing in high opportunity communities of our state. I have taken on the critical task of obtaining affordable housing for me and my family. The road to finding housing in thriving communities has always been daunting. We have tried entering the lottery to obtain a housing voucher, and signed up to be put on the waiting list for public housing with our local housing authorities. None of these methods, however, have ever provided us with the opportunity to live in a flourishing environment.

I feel that often times subsidized housing programs can miss the mark by placing families in low income neighborhoods, which they can afford but are not where they really want to live. My family and I, though low-income, do not choose to accept poverty as a mindset. I'm aware of racially-restrictive covenants that were put in place decades ago. Research has shown that their legacies are still being upheld in prominent communities like West Hartford to date.¹

My family and I have never stopped aiming higher to overcome the lack of opportunity we have been given, and this sentiment is similar throughout many marginalized communities. My family and I are currently on yet another waiting list to be approved for an affordable housing unit. I can't help but anticipate what the condition of that unit will be. Will it be in an area of concentrated poverty? Will the area be safe enough for my younger sister to play outside? Will there be a liquor store on the corner of each block? These are major concerns for me and my family.

Far too often low-income, minority families are limited to affordable units in isolated communities, and these are presented to them as the only choice. H.B. 7297 helps to provide those families with opportunities to live in thriving communities with safe, decent housing and highly-resourced schools. My Grandmother often uses the saying "if you don't stand for something, you fall for anything." Today, I am doing just that: I am taking a stand for my family's future and the future of many other families in the State of Connecticut who are just like mine. Every family deserves to have a place to call home that they can afford in a community where they can thrive. I ask that you cast your vote in support of H.B. 7297, as you will be supporting the families that this bill will impact.

¹ . McGann, Shaun. "The Effects of "Redlining" on the Hartford Metropolitan Region." *ConnecticutHistory.org*. Connecticuthistory.org, n.d. Web. 17 Feb. 2017.