

Insurance and Real Estate Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: HB-5376 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING REAL ESTATE.

Vote Date: 3/12/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/3/2026

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Insurance and Real Estate Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

Raised Bill No. 5376 establishes a task force studying the need for developing a streamlined state court appeals process for individuals who oppose the decisions made by a historic district commission. The study is needed to evaluate whether a simpler, fairer and more efficient process is needed for individuals affected by those decisions. The bill also amends statute 8-30g by adding a new subsection that will require building designers to submit a life-safety report before proceeding with their project. The amendment addresses the lack of early-stage oversight for unconventional construction designs that can cause delays, code compliance issues, and legal disputes later in the development process.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE (IF APPLICABLE):

The substitute language was used to narrow the scope of the bill and focus it on substantive policy changes. Specifically, it removes the provision establishing a working group on historic district commission appeals, indicating a shift away from a study component and toward addressing the affordable housing and life safety report requirements in Section 2. The remaining technical change further refines the bill's language without altering its core intent.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None Expressed

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Representative Raghieb Allie-Brennan of District 2: testified that FOIA-obtained correspondence and local experiences in Bethel revealed a procedural gap in the review of high-density housing projects using non-traditional construction methods. He cited uncertainty in life-safety evaluations and a lack of detailed documentation at the site plan stage, which may require municipalities to make approval decisions without sufficient safety compliance information.

Randy Heckman, Building Official for the Town of Coventry and president of the Connecticut Building Officials' Association: supports the intent of section 2 of the bill, but raises concerns about the lack of specificity regarding the required contents of the preliminary life safety report, noting that detailed safety plans may be difficult to develop at the early stages of project design.

The Western Connecticut Council of Governments: testified in support of section 2 of the bill, identifying the structural gap in the state's regulatory framework for housing projects using off-site, modular, or proprietary construction methods. They state that the current sequencing of zoning approval prior to life-safety verification may lead to delayed identification of code compliance issues, resulting in project disruptions, delays, legal disputes, and that the amended statute would protect those involved in the development of these projects and support the production of affordable housing.

Several speakers from the Connecticut Fire Marshals Association testified on section 2 of the bill, supporting its intent while raising concerns with the current language, urging clarification regarding the information the preliminary Life Safety Report should consist of, including licensed architects in the preparation of the report, and ensuring that proposed designs can comply with the Fire Safety Code without requiring modifications:

- Roger Nelson, President
- Patrick Tourville, Vice President
- Walter Summers, Co-Legislative Representative

Lena Gjonaj: a citizen who owns a historical property, supports section 1 that would establish a task force to study the necessity of a streamlined state court appeal system.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Gina Calabro, CEO of the Connecticut Chapter of the American Institute of Architects: speaking on behalf of over 1,600 members, opposes section 2 of Raised Bill No. 5376 due to the exclusion of licensed architects from authorized professionals performing building safety evaluations. She cites architects' education, training, and experience in life-safety design, along with concerns about the potential implications of their exclusion on the development of such reports.

Reported by: Arriana Gilbert

Date: 3/23/2026