Planning and Development Committee
JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: HB-5500 / Bill Status / Public Hearing Testimony
Title: AN ACT CONCERNING A WAIVER OF INTEREST ON CERTAIN DELINQUENT MUNICIPAL PROPERTY TAXES.
Vote Date: 3/13/2026
Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute
PH Date: 3/11/2026
File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Planning and Development

REASONS FOR BILL:

The bill looks to authorize the municipalities of Bridgeport and Stratford, Connecticut, to waive mandatory interest penalties and return funds that accumulated from a neighboring housing cooperative's troubled budget.

Residents of both communities have begun requesting financial relief to help treat the debt repayment problem, and the call has been vast. The bill is expected to bring $425,000 in relief to an approximately $1 million share in debt.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE (IF APPLICABLE):

The substitute language allows any municipality to waive interest on delinquent property taxes, and return payments made towards such interest, for any common interest community containing more than 500 units that is in judicial receivership.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Stratford Town Council, Chair, Anthony Afriyie:
Supports the bill and its intentions to waive mandatory interest penalties. Mr. Afriyie supports addressing outstanding obligations with returned funds and believes in charting a more accountable course for Success Village.

CGA, Senator, Herron Gaston:
Speaks in support of the bill in his capacities as state senator and pastor. Sen. Gaston recounts several complaints from residents who paid their monthly charges and still lost heating, which made evident the need for a solution. He advocates for removing the financial burden from residents and shifting it onto a court-appointed receiver who would restabilize the financial footing.

City of Bridgeport, Mayor, Joseph Ganim:
Town of Stratford, Mayor, David Chess:
Submit joint testimony to express support for HB 5500. The mayors request action that would provide relief to over 900 families within their two communities. They believe the bill achieves three vital goals: relieving residents of financial burden, providing the Receiver the means to balance a budget, and ensuring the community's affordable future.

Success Village Cooperative, Former President, Marylou Weeks:
Ms. Weeks echoes the thoughts of her fellow residents, sharing that the refund of $425,000 would help pay off the additional $1,000,000 worth of debt. She says funds were misappropriated once her successor took office and that her lawsuit makes this evident.

Bridgeport City Council, Councilwoman, Maria Pereira:
Supports the bill and states that it wouldn't impact state coffers in any way. Ms. Pereira highlights how the bill needs to explicitly authorize Bridgeport and Stratford the ability to waive interest penalties and issue refunds.

Ludivia Londono, Bridgeport:
Jayson Fernandes, Bridgeport:
Manuel Lima, Bridgeport:
Richard Matos, Bridgeport:
Defends the bill, arguing it wouldn't require any money from the state. As unit owners, they request that the mandatory interest penalty be waived and Success Village be refunded so as to facilitate debt repayment.

Elba Garcia, Bridgeport:
Rebecca Haas, Bridgeport:
Hannah Oak, Brideport:
Maria Rodrigues, Bridgeport:
Willie Smith, Bridgeport:
Alicja Tomasik, Bridgeport:
Bernice Wasiluk, Bridgeport:
Anonymous 1001, Bridgeport:
Anonymous 1026:
Arlene Brainard, Bridgeport:
Robin Gleason, Bridgeport:
Morgan Schick, Bridgeport:

This majority resident group urges passage of the bill. They claim the issue is more than just making a fiscal correction; it's bringing basic justice and compassion to a community that needs it. Motivated by the need for a fresh start and fiscal equity, they ask for the full legislature's support.

Volodymyr Vikhrenko:
Mr. Vikhrenko states his parents had been long-time residents of the village, who went without heating and hot water for years. He points out failures from a business perspective and says that management should be expected to pay back the debt.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Anonymous 1023:
Holds that the bill acts as a special carve-out for a favored property. They do not think the bill is equitable and argue that it legislates relief for one chosen development.

Cynthia Steckler:
Opposes the bill, referring to it as unfair, unethical, and undemocratic.

Reported by: Zachary Robinson **Date: 3/17/26**