

Planning and Development Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: HB-5507 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS.

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 Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill requires municipalities to allow accessory dwelling units as-of-right on single-family lots, removes the ability to opt out, limits local zoning restrictions, and creates a state program with preapproved designs and incentives to encourage ADU construction.

It is intended to expand housing supply, reduce regulatory barriers, and promote more affordable and flexible living options.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE (IF APPLICABLE):

The substitute language deletes provisions concerning restrictive deed covenants, modifies the allowable size for accessory dwelling units, and clarifies that the owner of an accessory dwelling unit may rent such units.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None Expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

State of Connecticut, Representative, Nick Menapace:

As a member of the East Lyme Planning Commission, I know the serious housing shortage facing Connecticut. ADU's represent a practical community-compatible way to expand our housing supply. We in East Lyme recognize the need and recommended that the town adopt regulations allowing ADU's. This proposal is often met with outsized fear, and some see it

ass the end of community character where it is really the opposite and is one of the gentlest forms of housing growth. ADU's will not solve our housing shortage but it is a practical step that empowers homeowner's flexible options and strengthens the tax base of our municipalities.

Home Builders & Remodelers Association, CEO, Jim Perras:

We represent residential builders, developers, remodelers and housing professionals directly involved in addressing Connecticut's housing shortage. ADU's are one of the most effective and least disruptive ways to increase housing supply that provide flexible housing options for a variety of households. The legislation will remove certain barriers that limit the creation of ASUs by preventing municipalities from requiring owner-occupancy, limiting excessive parking requirements and unnecessary design restrictions while preserving local authority. We support the directing the Commissioner of Housing to establish a preapproved accessor dwelling unit design model program. These provisions represent a balanced approach to expanding housing and allowing communities to add housing incrementally without large-scale development or changes to a neighborhoods character.

Guilford Planning and Zoning and Affordable Housing Commission, Larry Rizzolo:

Connecticut needs zoning reform to create affordable and market-rate housing in sufficient quantity. ADUs are a slow long-term solution but a godsend for seniors who want to stay in their homes and provide rental assistance. Zoning assistance rests with the State of Connecticut but some of that authority is delegated to local governments that understand local conditions. Requiring municipalities to allow ADU's as-of-right will allow them to establish standards of their own.

Friendship Service Center, CEO, Caitlin Rose:

As a resident of Hamden and a longtime homelessness and housing expert I am excited to see the inclusion to build upon efforts to expand starter homes and senior homes in Connecticut. ADU's meet a true demand in the market for renters and homeowners. They increase property value and address housing cost among seniors and lower-income households. The minimum square footage needs to be tweaked along with renting to non-blood relative allowed.

East Haddam, Senior Vice President, Jeffery Miller:

As a real estate finance professional, I see how ADU's are one of the most practical and least disruptive ways to expand housing opportunities. Allowing the state to pre-approve ADU designs, and incentives could help simplify permitting and reduce the cost to build these units. ADU's play an important role in supporting aging in place by allowing older residents to stay in their homes by creating modest rental opportunities. ADU's are an opportunity to increase housing that is flexible, scalable and compatible with existing residential areas.

Trumbull, Thomas Broderick:

As a Town Councilor in Trumbull and an advocate for my town ADU's could be a more affordable housing option. Accessory dwelling units are smaller secondary housing units that can be attached or detached to a single-family residential lot. These are an American staple for those families who need help in upkeep and taxes, or parents helping their children stay closer to home while maintaining their home.

Mercatus Center, George Mason University, Mercatus Center, Charles Gardner:

Connecticut residents continue to be burdened financially by high housing costs. Local land restrictions and limiting property owners' right to build housing has been a major contribution to housing options. Connecticut needs reforms as those proposed in this bill to bring ADU laws inline with recent states to help address Connecticut's housing shortage.

Connecticut Voices for Children, MPH , Carmen Clarkin:

Connecticut is facing an affordable housing crisis with half of renters spending more than 30 percent of their monthly income on housing. This bill makes it easier for Connecticut residents create new housing options. This does not solve the housing crisis but can be an important piece of the affordable housing puzzle. ADU's are generally more affordable because of their size, and they can also increase the total property value. The Federal Housing Finance Agency has found that ADU's have increased the value of homes and is a benefit for seniors, moderate- and lower-income families, and families. Eighteen states have passed ADU legislation and while Connecticut's Public Act 21-29 expanded local zoning options it does include an "opt out" provision. By removing the "opt-out" it will allow for the creation of housing that the state desperately needs and remove some of the barriers. The task by the Commissioner of Housing to create a pre-approved ADU design needs to be streamlined to increase housing diversity and affordability.

LISC Connecticut, Senior Executive Director, Jim Horan:

ADU's are an efficient and economical way to increase housing in Connecticut. According to the National Low-Income Housing Coalition Connecticut needs nearly 95,000 units of housing to meet the need of renters. Rental housing options are limited especially for seniors and young adults. We recommend this bill but with modifications to lines 32-36 the minimum square footage and lines 51-58 making clearer the elimination of owner-occupancy requirements.

Builder and Developer, Cheshire, Kenneth Mita:

The housing shortage affecting families' employers and communities across the state will require a variety of solutions. Smaller and more flexible housing options are one of the most practical and least disruptive. We support the pre-approved ADU designs and incentives and know how this will help those age in place.

Pro-Homes Connecticut, Program Director, Phoebe Allen, Nick Kantor,:

At Pro-Home we advocate for an "all of the above" strategy to solve Connecticut's housing crisis. Our pillar of advocacy is the Starter and Senior Homes Package with a renewed push for ADU's. Whether attached, detached, or a garage or basement apartment they represent a significant opportunity to create more housing options. We recently released a report along with the Local Initiatives Support Corporation on expanding ADU's. We would like the language in the bill clarified to make it legal to allow a homeowner to rent an ADU to anyone, increasing their income and the value of the property. We have included some suggestions to simplify and strengthen the bill.

City of New London, Director of Human Services, Jeanne Milstein:

This bill is similar to those passed by other states and will help residents who are struggling to afford housing. Following the expiration of the COVID rent moratorium evictions rose. Wages have not kept pace with the increases in rent. Renters are paying over half their income for housing, and we need affordable options for tenants. In 2021 the state passed some reforms to support accessory dwelling units, but we need to remove some of the obstacles to make it easier and feasible for homers to create ADU's.

Partnership for Strong Communities, Research Associate, Shreyas Nair:

Research demonstrates that ADU's are an effective way to expand housing options. ADU's allow small homes to be built on existing residential lots, adding additional housing where infrastructure already exist. Experts vied ADU's as a practical way to add housing supply in neighborhoods that otherwise allow only single-family homes. ADU's add housing in low-density and transit-oriented areas. Because they are built on land that already contains a primary home, they are often less expensive and rent for hundreds of dollars less per month. An AARP survey found that 69% of adults age 50 or older consider living in an ADU to stay close to family and maintain independence. At least eighteen states have already enacted laws to permit ADU's statewide. Connecticut faces a housing shortage that affects, affordability, economic mobility and community stability.

People Friendly Stamford:

As an advocacy group dedicated to making neighborhoods more walkable, bikeable, transit-rich and housing abundant we find that ADU's are an important part of the housing mix. Current restrictions are prohibitive for many homeowners. In Stamford the requirements for minimum lot sizes of 10,000 sq ft with an ADU being 800 sq. ft. have resulted in few ADU's are being built.

Norwalk, Anne Wennerstrand,:

Expanding opportunities for ADUs is an important step toward addressing Connecticut's housing challenges. Throughout Connecticut there is increased pressure on housing supply, rising costs and a growing number of residents who struggle to find stable, affordable places to live. Standardizing the process for creating ADUs while maintaining appropriate safety and zoning conditions helps remove unnecessary barriers. Clear and consistent rules make the proses more transparent, fair and accessible.

Sustainable Streets Norwalk, Matthew Silber, John Levin:

ADUs Give property owners the opportunity to increase their income and allow residents to choose living accommodations that work best for them. The previous bill contained and "opt-out" clause is unfair to property owners who wish to earn extra income or keep elderly relatives lose are prevented by restrictive zoning. Make ADUs legal across the state.

East Haven Zoning Board of Appeals, Vice Chair, Cindy Sparago:

I believe ADUs offer a much-needed creative housing solutions to Connecticut. The objective of ADUs is to create housing stock while allowing owners to age in their homes and afford their taxes and utilities. Removing the owner occupancy requirement encourages investors to over develop properties. I have included in my testimony sections of the bill that I oppose.

Global Goals Ambassador, Alan Cavagnaro:

As a former Planning and Zoning Commissioner from South Windsor I support this legislation. Due to low construction ADUs represents a unique entry point for individual pursuing an affordable home that is quite often below the national average. As a land use commissioner in South Windsor, I have tried to approach decisions from a property right perspective you should be able to build and ADU if it is within regulations. ADUs are good for Connecticut, and we need to take a stronger stance to support this idea.

Calgani Real Estate, Wallingford, Broker, Jennifer DeVio:

Connecticut is facing a housing shortage and ADUs are one of the most practical and least disruptive ways to expand housing opportunities. ADUs allow homeowners to create small secondary units providing housing options for seniors, caregivers, young adults and small households. The bill strengthens existing ADU framework and directs the state to develop pre-approved ADU designs and incentives. These improvements encourage responsible, incremental housing growth while maintain the character of existing neighborhoods.

Matt Lazell-Fairman:

As a disabled person with limited income, I struggle to find housing. Being disabled reduces the supply of housing that is accessible. Where I live there are few apartments that have elevators and the expansion and regulations of ADU laws expands the supply of housing that is suitable for elderly or disabled people. ADU reform opens new income streams for homeowners and new possibilities for families to combine one property while still allowing for space and privacy. ADUs expand the supply of housing and from my perspective is a slam dunk.

Also supporting the bill are:

Casey Camire

Daniel Darbandi

Paul Fox

Amy Souchuns

Rebecca Stoll

Ellen Thompson

Kurt Weatherford

Nicol Eddy

Anonymous

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Connecticut Water Works Association, Elizabeth Gara:

As ADUs become more prevalent, water utilities have raised concerns particularly if they are mandated as-of-right. If the lot that the ADU is subdividable, and ca be sold separately a second connection should be required. Existing water service to the main house may not have sufficient pressure or capacity. The Massachusetts' ADU law provides that municipalities can't impose additional permitting or infrastructure unless required by the regional or local utility provider. This language strikes the appropriate balance between supporting the creation of ADUs and protecting public water supplies.

Greenwich, Selectwoman, Rachael Khanna:

As a former State Representative, I oppose the bill because it invalidates previous municipal opt outs for ADUs. This undermines a town's zoning authority without attention to existing infrastructure capacity that could pose risks to neighborhoods and the surrounding environment.

CCM, Advocacy Manager, Zacharym McKeown:

This proposal circumvents local zoning authority and undermines the compromise reached in Public Act 21-29. Last session CCM worked with legislators and key stakeholders on a housing reform package and this bill undoes key elements and reopens issues that were previously resolved.

Connecticut Land Conservation Council, Executive Director, Amy Blaymore Paterson:

CLCC's testimony is limited to Section 3. This section invalidates any restrictive covenant on land contrary to use under residential zoning regulations. Without a clear definition of "arbitrary restriction" could be interpreted to invalidate a wide range of lawful restrictions on land. The provision could affect conservation restrictions having serious consequences across the state.

John Hair:

Expanding housing options is an important policy but this bill eliminates the municipal opt-out provision that is central to the compromise adopted in the previous ADU legislation. The bill limits town's ability to regulate ADUs in ways that reflect local conditions. The broader policy this sends is most troubling.

Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments, Executive Director, Samuel Gold:

Section 3 sets a minimum size of ADU at 1,000 square feet or 30% of the square footage in the primary dwelling. Municipalities would be allowed to set and even higher minimum square footage. This is larger than many houses and most are being unit in PA 25-1. Such a minimum size would make them more expensive and may also prohibit ADUs where septic or well capacity is more limited. Minimum square footage has been found to be illegal in Connecticut case law and the Connecticut General Statutes.

Attorney, Keith Ainsworth

As a practicing conservation and land use attorney for 36 years I oppose the language in Section 3. The pejorative term arbitrary restrictions are undefined and could result in consequences of undoing conservation easements. This term should be either defined to include specific restrictions or removed.

Lee Ann Berry, Gales Ferry:

I understand the need for housing solutions in Connecticut especially for seniors, young families and workers but this bill raises serious concerns about local decision-making and long-term impacts on our communities. Many towns rely on the opt-out provision when making planning decisions. Local governments are best positioned to determine how these units fit within their infrastructure. Removing regulated key elements such as owner occupancy, parking and minimum size requirements also limits responsible planning.

The bill raises concerns regarding Connecticut's limited industrial land near highways and transportations infrastructure. These are essential of remanufacturing and provide stable,

middle-class jobs. Allowing residential development on these parcels creates long term conflicts between housing and industrial operations.

Western Connecticut Council of Governments, Executive Director, Francis Pickering:

Section 3 expands the definition of unlawful restrictive covenants and would invalidate many recorded deed restrictions governing residential development. Private covenants recorded in land titles are widely used to regulate land use and development patterns. These appear in subdivision deeds, neighborhood associations, lake associations and other planned developments. When property owners purchase homes they do so with the understanding that the restrictions apply equally to neighboring properties. These arrangements function as mutual agreements that regulate matters such as:

The number of dwelling units permitted on a lot

The construction of accessory apartments or secondary dwellings

The number, size, and location of buildings

Building configuration and placement

The use of outbuildings and accessory structures

Covenants play an important role in managing shared infrastructure and environmental resources. We also have concerns with wells, septic systems, ground water protection, electrical service, utility capacity, building code considerations and infrastructure capacity and documentations. We support expanding housing opportunities policies that must remain aligned with infrastructure capacity, environmental protection and the longstanding legal framework governing property rights and residential development.

Ridgefield, Kirk Carr:

Expanding housing options is important but this bill moves them in the opposite direction. Instead of building on local progress it preempts municipal zoning authority. It eliminates the municipal opt-out compromise that required a two-thirds vote on both the zoning and legislative bodies as adopted in previous ADU legislation. The state respected local planning process and allowed communities to determine if statewide mandates were appropriate for their communities. The Regional plan Association researched that roughly 68% of Connecticut municipalities chose to opt out of the ADU framework, two towns of towns allow ADUs in some form demonstrating that opting out often reflected a desire to preserve local planning. Section 2 limits towns to regulate ADUs by taking away the ability to impose additional standards. Housing policy works when the state and municipalities operate as partners and housing solutions require a durable partnership.

Watertown, Attorney, Jonathan Chappell:

My practice is the representation of Common Interest Communities throughout Connecticut. The bill addresses worthy goals but Section 3 overreaches in respect to common interest communities and their governing documents unlawful restrictions imposed on ADUs. The simplest option is to create and exemption for common interest communities to avoid unintended consequences.

Attorney, Linda Francois:

As an attorney working in land conservation and transactions for 44 years that represents many charitable land protections entities and the changes in Section 3 could be used to invalidate the Connecticut laws. The section needs to exclude conservation retractions.

Stamford, Peter McGunness:

This bill is unconstitutional under the Takings Clause of the Fifth Amendment because it deprives affected property owners of a protected property right. The bill prohibits the enforcement of certain residential land use restrictions that would prevent or limit the creation or use of ADUs on residential lots. Property owners who rely on restrictive covenants often paid higher purchase prices indeed-restricted neighborhoods and they deserve protection.

_Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association, Govt Relations Committee, John Guskowski:

We oppose sections of the bill establishing minimum floor areas. This restriction is unnecessary and would preclude the development of many ADUs. Requiring a minimum size beyond the public health and building code requires is overly prescriptive and counter productive to the goal of adding housing supply. As long as an area meets building, health, and fire codes there should be no zoning minimum.

Branford PNZ, Sharon Huttner:

ADUs may be appropriate in some communities under tailored local regulations this bill moves toward a state-mandated, one-size-fits-all zoning approach that moves local decision-making authorities from municipalities and residents. The bill limits enforcement of land-use restrictions such as road capacity, septic capacity, parking, wetlands and neighborhood character. Housing affordability is important but must be addressed in ways that respect local planning authority, environmental protection and infrastructure limitations.

Matthew Tocks:

The bill re-trades a prior deal with Connecticut Towns. The Opt-out provision was central to the compromise adopted in previous ADU legislation in 2021. Two thirds of towns that opt out still allow ADUs in some form. Removing the opt-out framework changes the rules after towns have relied upon them.

The following also submitted testimony in opposition to the bill:

Mother from Wethersfield

Anne Ahern

Michelle Chamberlain

Jerry Cincotta

Paula and Kevin Flaherty

Linda Dalessio

Lena Gjonaj

Christina Linford

Edward Maccio

Joan Mccoy

Susan McNulty

Meredith Obreiter

Brian Rathbun

Sherman Porter

Christine Sinopli

Eric Smith

Cynthia Steckler

Erin Staima

**Tracey from Wethersfield
Lj White
4 anonymous**

Reported by: Pamela Bianca

Date: March 20, 2026