

**Testimony in Support of**  
**House Bill 6418, An Act Concerning Abandoned and Blighted Property Receivership**  
**Planning and Development Committee Hearing**  
**February 19, 2021**

Good afternoon Senator Cassano, Representative McCarthy, Senator Hwang, Representative Zawistowski and distinguished members of the Planning and Development Committee. The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving is grateful for this opportunity to submit written testimony in support of on **House Bill 6418, An Act Concerning Abandoned and Blighted Property Receivership**.

**The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving is the community foundation for the 29-town Greater Hartford region.** As a community foundation, we manage approximately \$1 billion in assets, in 2020, the Foundation distributed a record-breaking \$52 million in grants to promote equitable opportunity for all residents in our region. Made possible by the gifts of generous individuals, families and organizations, the Foundation has awarded grants of more than \$837 million since its founding in 1925.

As part of our efforts to dismantle structural racism and improve social and economic mobility for Black and Latinx residents of Greater Hartford, the Hartford Foundation seeks to **increase the number of Hartford residents living in higher opportunity neighborhoods**. Higher opportunity neighborhoods are defined by a variety of factors, including low unemployment, better performing schools, lower crime and greater availability of quality, affordable housing stock.

The Hartford Foundation seeks to increase the numbers of Hartford residents living in higher opportunity neighborhoods both by increasing the opportunities in Hartford neighborhoods and by increasing the ability of Hartford residents to choose to move to other higher opportunity areas throughout the Greater Hartford region. In order to support these outcomes, the Foundation invests in efforts designed to increase the stability, availability, and quality of affordable housing in the Greater Hartford region; align and leverage additional investment in Hartford neighborhoods, and increase social strength and connectedness of Hartford neighborhoods. COVID has reinforced the need for all of us to live in safe, stable homes, in safe, stable neighborhoods, in safe, stable communities.

Public commitment must address the interplay of basic human needs, including access to food, mental and physical health care services, housing and other needs, and provide adequate support to the nonprofit organizations providing these services.

The Hartford Foundation offers its **support of House Bill 6418, An Act Concerning Abandoned and Blighted Property Receivership that allows all Connecticut municipalities to use receivership as a tool to remedy local blighted properties**. Current law limits receivership's use to municipalities with population of 35,000 or more. With passage of this legislation, more communities can use

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receivership to allow private entities and nonprofits to invest in much needed repairs to transform abandoned and blighted buildings into productive reuse and to improve the quality of life for neighborhood residents.

In recent years, the Hartford Foundation has been working to support efforts to increase investment in Hartford neighborhoods, including a Hartford-wide survey and analysis of housing market conditions and mapping of neighborhood assets. The Foundation has also supported the planning efforts for the Hartford Land Bank, a mechanism, including receivership that other communities outside of the urban core can employ to address blight. Blight not only has negative impacts on property values and economic development efforts, it can also contribute to higher incidences of crime.

Research confirms that stable, affordable, quality housing and neighborhood amenities are key pathways to economic mobility and that inclusive economic mobility yields greater economic growth. The Foundation is eager to partner with legislators, advocates and municipalities to promote inclusive development principles, ensuring all residents have the opportunity to thrive.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our staff at [policy@hfpg.org](mailto:policy@hfpg.org) or 860-548-1888.