



Testimony in Support of H.B. 6418 – An Act Concerning Abandoned and Blighted Property Receivership

Patrick McMahon, CEO
Connecticut Main Street Center

Joint Committee on Planning and Development
February 19, 2021

Dear Senator Casano, Representative McCarthy Vahey, Senator Hwang, Representative Zullo and distinguished members of the Planning and Development Committee:

I write on behalf of Connecticut Main Street Center, Inc. (CMSC) in support of H.B. 6418 as this bill will promote turning vacant and blighted properties in our downtowns, village centers and neighborhood commercial districts into productive properties.

CMSC is a statewide nonprofit working to unleash the economic potential of Connecticut's downtowns. We have been advocating for the adaptive reuse of vacant and underutilized older and historic properties. In 2019, we held a two-day Summit on Adaptive Reuse that brought national speakers to Connecticut to help communities turn these vacant and underutilized buildings into assets rather than liabilities.

The General Assembly took an important step in 2019 in providing for the appointment of receivers to address long-standing vacant properties. Vacant properties often result in costs to local municipal services such as police, fire, public works, and building department. They also impact property values and tax revenue.

Receivership provides a mechanism for communities to allow private entities and nonprofits to invest in much needed repairs to transform abandoned and blighted buildings into productive use and to improve the quality of life for residents and neighbors who are already there. However, the legislation was limited to municipalities with populations over 35,000 residents – leaving over 140 communities without this potential remedy. The issue of vacant and blighted properties impacts smaller rural and suburban towns, as well as our larger municipalities. Every community has it: that vacant, eye-sore building with an absent owner.

Just one case in point, in Suffield with a population of approximately 15,000 people, two houses have stood vacant for two decades directly across from the Town Hall. Several parties have been interested in either purchasing or leasing the properties, but the current owner has taken no steps to improve the property. Stories such as this exist in many of our small communities. We urge this bill to allow receivership in all Connecticut communities.



Thank you for your consideration of this measure. Please contact me at 860-985-2083 if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patrick J. McMahon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a clear, legible font.

Patrick J. McMahon, CEO