

HB 7450

PA 663 (Vetoed)

1971

State & Urban Development 256-258

House 5063

Senate 3402

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**JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS**

**STATE
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STATE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

WEDNESDAY

MARCH 10, 1971

Mary Whitehouse: I'd like to speak in opposition. Many of these bills that I've read and I'm concerned with many of these bills that are presented, and I've been here for several days and listened to many of them, and it seems to me that they userp many times the very idea of the bill in the first place, where you provide federal funds and all that, and a like amount must be provided by towns and cities, and shortly after that we had another bill introduced for aid from the State, without any provision as to how that aid is going to be provided. I think this is poor legislation, and very irresponsible, if you ask me, and many times these bills are supposed to help people in circumstances by providing funds without any real effort to bring them up so they can provide these services by themselves, which I think is another wrong thing in many of these bills. You should put the money where it will be the most help and have long-lasting effect as far as these people that we're really trying to help.

Representative Gaffney: You understand that these are not bills proposed necessarily by this Committee, but by Senators and Representatives. Anyone else on the ACT CONCERNING HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS? Hearing none, the hearing is closed. AN ACT CONCERNING RELOCATION ASSISTANCE TO REAL PROPERTY OWNERS FOR HIGH MORTGAGE INTEREST PAYMENTS. Another statement of purpose bill, 7039. Anyone to speak in favor? In opposition? House Bill 7450. AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION. Anyone in favor?

Mr. Eric Hatch: Eric Hatch, Chairman, Connecticut Historical Commission. I'm speaking in favor of House Bill 7450, the adoption of which by the General Assembly will make it possible for our Commission to increase and improve its service to the people of Connecticut. At the present time, the Commission has two basic responsibilities. It is authorized to acquire, restore and maintain historic structures and sites, of which Old New-Gate Prison and the Prudence Crandall House are two outstanding examples. It is also authorized to give grants-in-aid and otherwise cooperate with various agencies -public and private- concerned in one way or another with historic preservation. This program of cooperation is working well, but we feel that the Historical Commission will be in a better position to carry out the intent of the legislation by which it was created if it has powers of initiative as well as the power to cooperate. Therefore, the bill now before you provides that the Commission may institute, implement and promote patriotic and educational programs dealing with the historical heritage of Connecticut. Many state historical commissions, for example, can and do underwrite scholarly publications and undertake such publications themselves. This is something we feel the Connecticut Historical Commission should be doing, as part of its statutory duty of preserving, restoring and enhancing the historical heritage of the State, but the present law does not permit this. We feel that granting the Commission

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more initiative is important at any time, but especially so now that the nation has embarked on the observance of its Bicentennial. The Commission will always be glad to cooperate, as it is now able to do, with other organizations or agencies wishing to mount exhibits, stationary or touring, to produce historic pageants or to stage re-enactments of historic events. In addition, however, we feel that we should be able to initiate these and other such projects ourselves. Other sections of this Bill will remove certain undue restrictions imposed on the Commission's grant-in-aid program. We are now able to match on a dollar-for-dollar basis the cost incurred by a municipality or private organization which undertakes an approved historic project. However, in figuring the local cost of a project, we are not now able to include the fair market value of donated materials or services, such as volunteer labor. I was going to point out that when we were trying to help the Thomaston Opera House, they had considerable difficulty in matching the grant. A very small grant of \$8,000.00, because they had literally thousands of dollars worth of time that had been donated. Electricians..professional electricians..donated time. Any number of people ..young people have spent hours and even days cleaning this place that hasn't been touched in many years. If that situation came up again, it would be a very good thing, I feel, to be able to help them as we're supposed to do. In figuring the local cost of a project, we are not now able to include the fair market value of donated materials or services. If, for example, a local historical society is able to obtain volunteer labor to restore a historic landmark, it seems to us that the society has made just as valuable a contribution to the State as if it paid for the work in dollars. In the latter case, the society would be entitled to reimbursement for half the cost; and it seems only fair that, at the discretion of the Historical Commission, reimbursement should also be made for volunteer or donated contributions. Section 3 of House Bill 7450 adds to the law a necessary provision to deal with situations caused by natural disaster or act of God. It can happen, of course, that an historic structure or landmark, highly worthy of preservation, is damaged by storm, or fire, or some other disaster, and that local agencies are unable to qualify for a grant-in-aid on a 50-50 matching basis to save what otherwise would be lost. In such situations, we trust would occur but rarely, it seems to make good sense to empower the Commission, again at its discretion, to make a grant-in-aid even though the grantee in aid is not otherwise qualified. What we're really interested in is preserving historical buildings. Up until 3 and a half years ago, historic preservation in this State was almost exclusively a function of dedicated individuals and private organizations, to

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whom great credit is due. It was obvious, however, that despite their highly commendable efforts, Connecticut was in grave danger of loosing valuable and irreplaceable reminders of its heritage. Since the Commission's grant-in-aid program began on October 1, 1967, the trend has been reversed. At long last, historic preservation is on a sound operational basis in Connecticut. It may shortly be on a comfortable basis. We believe firmly that the people of this State want to keep it that way. The enactment of House Bill 7450 will help the Historical Commission to do the job that needs to be done. We ask for your favorable report, and I would personally like to thank this committee very much for the assistance it has given us in the past.

Representative Gaffney: Any other speakers in favor? Any in opposition? Close the hearing on House Bill 7450. House Bill 7584. AN ACT EXEMPTING TOWNS OF POPULATION OF LESS THAN TEN THOUSAND FROM THE STATE BUILDING CODE. Anyone speaking in favor?

Francis Emery: Francis Emery, from the Town of East Windsor. I'd just like to say that we're in favor of this bill. The bill as it stands ...a good many of the people in our town...it would be impossible for them to adhere to this, and therefore they're lawbreakers. I believe Mr. O'Donnell will state some of these cases. Thank you.

William O'Donnell: William O'Donnell, East Windsor. I'm in favor of this Bill very much. Our representative from South Windsor and East Windsor.. he presented this Bill. We're not trying to kick out the building code in East Windsor. A few months ago.. the statement we have here today verifies this.. we appointed 15 men to draw up a code for East Windsor. We stayed on it night after night for several weeks, and drew up a plan. And when we were informed to come to Hartford..to the headquarters, we got down there and were received by the Board. We got there on time..they were late. We talked for quite a long while, and many of them had to leave, and we were sitting there alone. We were informed shortly after East Windsor would go under the State Building Code, a couple of months before it was supposed to take effect. There was nothing we could do about it. Now, as I say, without imposing a code, we'd gladly accept the code that we've drawn up, and I think that any small town should not be burdened with a thing like this. State code has been mentioned three times at this meeting, and I hope you can see our point. Swimming pool safety devices.. every person owning land on which there is situated a swimming pool or other body of water being considered a hazard, containing four inches of water or more, at any point shall erect and maintain an enclosure either surrounding the property or pool area, sufficiently so that it will not be accessable to small children.

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would indicate that many of these bills are meritorious. However, I think it is wrong for us to take up the items without a total budget package being arrived at. I have agreed that we could take these up, that my objection to this particular bill will stand on all the succeeding items, strictly in the interest of the convenience of this assembly, so that we would not have to spend several hours on each individual item with statements and with votes.

MR. SPEAKER:

First, we thank the gentleman of the 165th, it is to the benefit of all the members that when we consider the budget that we have before us the major document and when we consider the tax program, it also is not cluttered by a number of individual bills.

CLERK:

I am now going to read the calendar numbers, bill numbers and the file numbers of 62 bills.

Beginning on page 6, Calendar 103, House Bill 5154, file 913.

Page 7, Calendar 277, substitute for House Bill 6908, file 1442.

Calendar 278, substitute for House Bill 7438, file 890.

Calendar 322, Substitute for House Bill 5661, file 919.

Calendar 421, House Bill 5688, file 1385.

Calendar 456, substitute for House Bill 6914, file 1388.

Page 8, Calendar 460, House Bill 7450, file 1198.

Calendar 544, substitute for Senate Bill 149, file 1501.

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