

From: [Staley, Angelina](#)
To: [Angie S; Staley, Angelina](#)
Subject: FW: Vote No on CHESS32.024. Do Not Give Away the Oversight Your Predecessors Wrote Into the Housing Trust Fund
Date: Tuesday, October 6, 2026 2:10:24 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Angelina “Angie” Staley

Board of Representatives

Administrative Clerk

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From: David @ Eyes Of Steel <davidmichel74@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, October 6, 2026 12:22 PM

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Subject: Vote No on CHESS32.024. Do Not Give Away the Oversight Your Predecessors Wrote Into the Housing Trust Fund

Ms Montalvo, I hope this email finds you well, please update the legislative record with this email, on item CHESS32.024.

Dear Members of the Board of Representatives,

I am asking you to vote no on CHESS32.024 when it comes before you after the public hearing. I do like to write in my column, but once in a while it is worth it to write to the board itself even before alerting the public of what is being discussed, considering the grave changes suggested for our Affordable Housing Trust Fund..

For three terms in Hartford I read, drafted and negotiated legislation, and I learned to read a bill for what it does, not for what its cover memo says it does. So I read everything posted on this item. The ordinance in force today, as shown in the [September 1 redline](#). The [amended draft](#) and the [clean draft](#) adopted in committee on September 30. The Land Use Bureau memos of July 10 and September 29. The email posted as the item's legal review. The fund's annual reports and budget. The staff reply of

October 5 to Rep. Walston's written questions. And the full recording of the September 30 CHEAD meeting.

I also spent a long conversation with Frances Lane, who served on the Board of Trustees as a tenant of affordable housing and has agreed to let me share what she remembers.

Below, the law as it stands today comes first, on its own. The language now proposed comes second. You should be able to read each without my commentary in the way. A side by side table of the two texts follows them.

WHAT THE LAW SAYS TODAY

Section 146-70 provides for "seven (7) Trustees on the Board of the Trust, five (5) who shall serve ex officio and two (2) members of the public." The five officials are the Land Use Bureau Chief, the President of this Board, the Chair of the Board of Finance, the Chair of the Zoning Board and the Director of Social Services. The two public members must be Stamford residents living in "housing qualifying as affordable" under section 146-66, appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by this Board. "The Land Use Bureau Chief shall serve as the Chair of the Board of Trustees."

Section 146-71 reads: "All decisions of the board shall be made by simple majority of the Board Members." A majority of the full board, which is four votes of seven. And "The presence of at least five (5) Board members constitutes a quorum."

Section 146-75.B sends to this Board "any proposed expenditure over one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000.00) approved by the Trustees," which you may reject within 45 days by a two thirds vote.

Section 146-75.C opens exactly two doors to the money. Anytime requests are limited to "requests for funds of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000.00) or less," reviewed quarterly, and "The Board shall disburse no more than thirty (30) percent of the funds available in the trust at the time it makes such determination." Anything larger goes through a public Notice of Funds Available whenever \$3,000,000 or more sits in the fund.

And section 146-75.C.2.b makes the housing plan a condition of spending: "Two (2) years after the creation of the Housing Trust Fund, no funds shall be disbursed in absence of an approved Stamford Affordable Housing Plan and all expenditures must demonstrate how they meet the goals and priorities established by the SAHP."

None of this was an accident. Ms. Lane attended the housing committee meetings throughout 2019 and 2020. She recalls that the first versions of this ordinance had no public trustees at all, and that the two seats for residents of affordable housing were won over opposition. The quorum of five was set on purpose, she says, after a member argued it was not right for two or three people to decide how that kind of money is spent. The \$100,000 review came late in the process, so that larger awards would come before this Board.

A previous Board wrote those protections. It knew what it was doing.

WHAT CHESS32.024 WOULD WRITE INSTEAD

The clean draft of September 30 rewrites every one of those rules.

"There shall be five (5) Trustees on the Board of the Trust, two (2) who shall serve ex officio and three (3) members of the public. Three (3) additional members of the public shall serve as alternates." The Land Use Bureau Chief, the Board of Finance and the Director of Social Services are gone. Only the President of this Board and the Chair of the Planning Board remain. Three mayoral appointees, with three more as alternates, become the majority.

The tenant requirement is gone too. In its place: "priority shall be given to residents who have lived experience residing in affordable housing or have professional experience developing or managing housing projects." Read the word "or." A developer satisfies it as fully as a tenant does. At the meeting, staff described the kind of new member they had in mind as someone with housing finance experience "or a retired developer or something."

Decisions would be made "by simple majority of the present Board Members," with a quorum of three. Staff put the consequence in writing in their [September 29 memo](#): "two votes would constitute a majority of those present and could approve a funding commitment." Two votes. Today the law requires four. This Board would see only an expenditure "over one million dollars (\$1,000,000.00)."

The \$100,000 limit on anytime requests is deleted, and so is the 30 percent cap. The trustees "shall accept, on a continuous basis, requests for funds" of any size.
The rule that stops spending when there is no approved Plan is deleted. A general line that spending be "based on and prioritized by" the Plan survives, with nothing behind it.
A new use appears: "Land Acquisition. To support the acquisition or assembly of land dedicated to future development of affordable housing." There is no deadline to build, no deed restriction and no bar on transfer to a private owner.

And in an ordinance that now opens seats to people who develop and manage housing, there is not one line on recusal or conflicts of interest.

THE TWO TEXTS, SIDE BY SIDE

Provision	Law today	Clean draft, September 30
Trustees (146-70)	Seven: five officials (Land Use Bureau Chief, BOR President, Board of Finance Chair, Zoning Board Chair, Director of Social Services) and two public members	Five: BOR President, Planning Board Chair and three public members, plus three alternates
Public members (146-70)	Must be Stamford residents living in "housing qualifying as affordable"	"priority" to lived experience in affordable housing "or" professional experience "developing or managing housing projects"; three year staggered terms
Chair (146-70)	"The Land Use Bureau Chief shall serve as the Chair"	Members elect a Chair and Vice Chair

Votes needed (146-71.B)	"simple majority of the Board Members," four of seven	"simple majority of the present Board Members," two per staff
Quorum (146-71.C)	Five	Three
BOR review (146-75.B)	Over \$100,000	Over \$1,000,000
Anytime requests (146-75.C)	\$100,000 or less, reviewed quarterly, no more than 30 percent of available funds at each review	Any amount, reviewed "at least quarterly," no cap
Plan requirement (146-75.C.2.b)	No funds disbursed "in absence of an approved Stamford Affordable Housing Plan"	Deleted
Interim provisions (146-75.C.2.a)	Six month limit on early spending	Deleted
Land acquisition (146-75.C.1.h)	Not listed	Added, with no deadline, deed restriction or transfer bar
Conflicts of interest	None	None
Effective date (146-77)	No section	"90 days after enactment and publication"

THE REASONS GIVEN DO NOT SURVIVE THE RECORD

We are told tenant seats cannot be filled. Staff told the committee that a candidate who met the residency requirement "wasn't appointed... for whatever reason." Ms. Lane says she was seated only after a member of this Board stepped in, because her application had stalled. When Rep. Walston asked in writing how many tenants were recruited and why any were turned down, staff answered that the Land Use Bureau "is not directly involved" and sent the question to the Mayor's Office. The administration that never filled the seat is now citing the empty seat as the reason to abolish it.

The July 10 memo goes further and argues that tenant seats "create an increased chance of possible conflict of interest with local applicants." Its remedy is to invite people with "professional experience developing or managing housing projects," when for profit developers are listed as eligible applicants in the same ordinance. A tenant on the board is a conflict. A developer on the board is expertise. That is the logic of this draft.

Meeting times tell the same story. Ms. Lane remembers trustees meeting at 4 or 4:30 in the afternoon, then at 6:30 in the evening. Today, staff say, they meet at 10 in the morning on weekdays. A working tenant cannot be at a weekday morning meeting. Then the seat goes empty, and the empty seat becomes the argument.

We are told your review adds delay and nothing else. Yet Land Use Bureau Chief Ralph Blessing told the committee that "we simply don't have the expertise and the resources to go [through] hundreds of pages of mortgage documents." If the office running the fund says it cannot fully examine the financing, a second set of eyes is the last thing to remove.

Look at what \$1,000,000 would remove, using staff's own table of fourteen awards. Only four were over \$1,000,000. Eight awards, \$3,975,000 in all, came before this Board and would never come again. One project, 66 Stillwater Avenue, received \$750,000 and then \$500,000 in a second request. Staff point out that both came to you. Under this draft, neither would. And the one harm staff can name from the current rule is Charter Oak's \$150,000 security deposit program, which went ahead anyway.

We are told the money must move faster. The fund's own reports show \$4,700,082.59 received and \$1,137,500 paid out in FY2025 and FY2026. On June 30, 2026 it held \$7,279,909.41, and not one of its seven open commitments had drawn a dollar. Projects set the pace of spending. Your 45 days do not.

Meanwhile the fees keep coming. The FY2027 budget anticipates \$22,396,838 from developers who chose to pay rather than build affordable units on site. For 3 Landmark Square alone, staff say the fee replaces 40 affordable homes, about \$269,000 for every unit not built.

Now look at what is actually being built. In five years the fund has produced new homes at one address, 36 Ann Street, three apartments. The one real addition in its pipeline is St. John Towers, where staff told the committee there will be "65 new units on site compared to what is there," with completion expected in 2029. The rest is smaller: supportive housing at two Pacific House sites on Stillwater Avenue, six units at 40 Stillwater, and the repair or replacement of homes that already exist. I know of no other construction in Stamford aimed at the people our homelessness crisis is reaching right now, elderly retirees on fixed incomes and the children of lower income families.

That is why fees in lieu are a tragic mistake. A developer who pays instead of building takes real units out of a mixed income building that would have opened with the rest of the project, and turns them into a check that waits years for matching grants. When that money finally lands, it too often builds the pockets of low income that mixed income buildings were meant to prevent. Every fee we accept in place of immediate units in mixed income buildings feeds our homelessness problem. The fund is about to hold more money than it has ever spent, and this is the moment the draft chooses to lift the cap, end the limit on anytime requests and take this Board out of all but the largest decisions.

HOW THIS ITEM REACHED YOU

The only "Law Department Review" posted on the [item's legislative page](#) is a short email dated August 19. Assistant Corporation Counsel Elizabeth Turner wrote to the Mayor's Chief of Staff, Bridget Fox: "Everything looks good to me, and I think Ramya is all set to get this submitted to the Boards." She added that the Declaration of Trust would need updating after approval and offered to work on it "with you or Emily and Ralph." Ms. Fox forwarded it to President Shaw that afternoon: "All set to move forward with the AHTF ordinance."

That email predates the September 1 redline and the September 29 amendments. It is not addressed to this Board, and it contains no analysis. What it does document is the Mayor's office clearing this item with this Board's President before it was filed. Ms. Lane also recalls asking, while she served, that the fund's

application be reviewed by Corporation Counsel, and learning later that it never was.

The September 29 staff memo is titled "Response to Questions Related to Item CHES 32.024." The questions were never posted. The public can read the answers and cannot see what was asked, or what was left unanswered.

Both memos come from the Land Use Bureau, the office that runs the fund, and both are addressed to President Shaw, a sponsor. The [July 10 memo](#) says it plainly: "Any changes to the ordinance would need to be initiated and approved by the Board of Representatives." The administration wrote the changes. This Board is being asked to initiate them.

A QUESTION FOR THIS BOARD

Nothing in the record shows that a single member of the public asked for any of this. At the meeting, the sponsor said it began when trustees asked for help. The memo that drives it came from the office that administers the fund. The legal clearance came through the Mayor's Chief of Staff.

This is not the first time this year that this Board has been asked to unwind the work of the Boards before it. In March the Mayor filed [LR32.016](#), an ordinance to repeal the Appointments Commission outright. Your Legislative and Rules Committee advanced it 9-0 in May, then postponed it after the June public hearing. Here, language an earlier Board considered and rejected in 2020 is back, with less oversight and fewer protections than before. The public never complained about tenants sitting on the trust fund. The public never complained about this Board reviewing large awards.

So why is an elected legislative body working to surrender its own oversight, and to hand these decisions to the executive branch and to the industry that applies for the money? Is this Board doing the bidding of the executive branch?

Your votes will answer that.

Respectfully,

David Michel
Stamford CT

Former three-term state representative from Stamford (2019-2025)

Lead Introducer/Proponent of the "Right to Counsel" legislation, and worked on, and supported many other housing legislative proposals (Just Cause in particular)

Sources

- Law today and September 1 changes: [September 1 redline](#)
- Amended draft, September 30: [Amended draft](#)
- Clean draft, September 30: [Clean draft](#)
- Land Use Bureau memo, July 10: [July 10 memo](#)
- Land Use Bureau "Response to Questions," September 29: [September 29 memo](#)
- Law Department review email, August 19: [Law Department review](#)

- Item page and sponsors: [CHESS32.024 legislative page](#)
- LR32.016, Appointments Commission repeal: [L&R report, May 26](#) and [L&R agenda, July 28](#)
- SAHTF annual reports FY2025 and FY2026 (pipeline, St. John Towers completion date), FY2027 budget: [SAHTF webpage](#)
- September 30 CHESS meeting (St. John Towers "65 new units"): [meeting video](#)

David Michel®

Stamford CT 06902

[David Michel, Columnist](#)

[Former Rep David Michel - Substack](#)

[National Lawyers Guild Legal Observer](#)

[Captain Paul Watson Foundation Outreach Team](#)

[Member of the NLG Environmental Justice, and Mass Defense Committees](#)

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Post Scriptum: by googling the name of the legislations and my name here is what co pilot says (record of some of my works), although it is not perfect. But just want to express i was a strong advocate at the state for good (fair for tenants and landlords) housing legislation, because most housing bills being pushed at the state are loaded for developers and i did not support many of those legislative noises.. These are all simple AI co-pilot searches:

David Michel, during his tenure as State Representative for Connecticut's 146th House District (2019–2025), was widely recognized as a **progressive legislator heavily engaged in housing policy and tenant protections**. Multiple sources affirm that housing issues were central to his legislative agenda:

Key Housing Initiatives

1. Right to Counsel for Tenants Facing Eviction

Michel was a prominent **proponent of providing legal representation to low-income renters** in eviction proceedings. This initiative aimed to prevent unjust evictions and reduce displacement, reflecting a strong commitment to housing justice. Sources indicate that he actively championed this policy initiative at the Connecticut General Assembly, demonstrating leadership in advocating for tenant protections.

2. Just Cause Eviction Legislation

He pushed for **Just Cause requirements**, restricting landlords from arbitrarily evicting tenants and requiring legitimate reasons for eviction. This is a hallmark of advocacy for **long-term housing stability and tenant rights**.

3. Resisting Subsidies to Developers via TOD Bills

Michel was **not supportive of providing "freebees" or developer handouts** through Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) legislation, emphasizing equity and community-centered approaches over developer incentives that could accelerate displacement or gentrification.

4. Other Progressive Housing Efforts

He sponsored or supported bills regulating rental assistance programs, notices of rent increases, short-term rental oversight, and the Housing Environmental Improvement Revolving Loan and Grant Fund (per Bill Sponsor

[1](#)

). These measures reflect ongoing efforts to **improve housing conditions, affordability, and sustainability** at the state level.

5. ☐

1 Source

Legislative Context

- Michel served on the **Planning and Development Committee**, which oversees land use, housing development approvals, and urban planning issues (

[1](#)

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[1](#)

). His committee assignments enabled him to **directly influence housing policy**, both through legislation and oversight.

- His record includes **critical positions on development**, opposing initiatives he judged likely to displace residents or favor profit over community welfare. This aligns with his broader progressive stance on housing, equity, and sustainable development.

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Based on his legislative record, advocacy, and public statements:

- **David Michel was indeed a housing champion** at the Connecticut General Assembly, leading efforts on tenant protections, equitable development, and progressive housing policies.
- He emphasized **Right to Counsel, Just Cause**, and explicit measures to **protect tenants and communities**, while rejecting policies that would disproportionately benefit developers at the expense of residents.
- His legislative philosophy combined **housing justice, social equity, and progressive urban planning**, marking him as a consistent voice for good housing bills in Connecticut.

References for Verification

- David Michel – Grokipedia
- David Michel – Bill Sponsor Records
- David Michel Right to Counsel Coverage – NowThis Politics
- Ballotpedia – David Michel

This record confirms the **centrality of housing advocacy** in his legislative career and highlights his **major contributions to tenant protections in Connecticut**.

It is not perfect accounting of what transpired but it gives you a small idea of some of my works at the state and of course it depends on what you ask in the google search engine or bing...i also supported on the expansion in 2023:

In 2021, Connecticut passed Public Act 21-34 (HB 6531), introduced in part by Rep. David Michel, establishing a statewide Right to Counsel program to provide income-eligible tenants facing eviction with free legal representation.

Overview of the Legislation

The bill, HB 6531, also known as **Public Act 21-34**, was enacted to create a **statewide Right to Counsel program** for tenants, lessees, or occupants of residential properties who are income-eligible and facing eviction or other “covered matters” such as administrative proceedings necessary to preserve housing subsidies

[ct.gov+2](#)

. Legislation took effect **July 1, 2021**, applying to cases initiated on or after that date

[ct.gov+1](#)

. The program aims to **ensure that low-income tenants have access to legal representation**, reducing eviction rates and housing instability

[CT Mirror+1](#)

Program Eligibility

To qualify for free legal representation under the program, tenants must generally meet one of these criteria:

- Have a household income **at or below 80% of the state median income**, adjusted for family size by HUD standards.
- Receive certain **public assistance**, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, SNAP, Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income, refugee resettlement benefits, state rental assistance, or federal Housing Choice Voucher Program participation

[2](#)

This also includes residents of trailers or mobile homes and covers a wide range of residential properties.

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2 Sources

Administration and Oversight

The **Judicial Branch** administers the program, contracting with designated non-profit organizations that specialize in **housing law and tenant services**

[ct.gov+1](#)

. An **11-member working group**, including state legislative appointees and representatives from the Judicial Branch and administering entity, advises on program policies

[ct.gov](#)

. Key program components include:

- Phased implementation based on income, ZIP codes, availability of attorneys, and funding.
- Annual reporting to the Housing Committee on number of clients served, case outcomes, and tenant engagement.
- Creation and dissemination of a **plain-language notice of tenants' rights** to be attached to eviction notices and lease termination communications

[2](#)

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2 Sources

Legislative Context and Impact

David Michel and other advocates championed the bill to address the **disproportionate lack of legal representation among low-income tenants**; prior to implementation, only about 7% of tenants had attorneys compared to almost all landlords

[CT Mirror+1](#)

. The legislation received broad support, reflecting recognition of the **public health, social, and economic consequences of**

evictions

[CT Mirror](#)

. Funding for the first years was allocated from federal pandemic relief funds, approximately **\$20 million** to cover legal representation for an estimated 12,000 tenants

[CT Mirror](#)

Early Results and Significance

Since implementation, the program has significantly increased tenant legal representation and has had measurable cost savings for the state by **preventing evictions, preserving housing stability, and reducing social service expenditures**, including emergency shelters and other state-support costs

[CT Mirror](#)

. Research indicates that tenants with legal counsel are **49% less likely to be evicted**

[evictionhelpct.org](#)

. The program forms part of a national "Civil Gideon" movement, promoting the right to counsel in civil cases like eviction, domestic violence, and child custody disputes

[evictionhelpct.org](#)

Resources for Tenants

Tenants can access information and assistance via:

- EvictionHelpCT.org
- **Phone:** 1-800-559-1565
- Notices of rights must be included in eviction-related documents per Public Act 21-34

[2](#)

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2 Sources

In summary, the 2021 Connecticut legislation introduced and supported by David Michel created a pioneering Right to Counsel program, ensuring that income-eligible tenants facing eviction have access to free legal representation and strengthening housing stability statewide.

And in 2023, i pushed and supported its expansion: [CT SB00941 | 2023 | General Assembly | LegiScan](#)

1. [_](#)

Like

David Michel and the “Just Cause” Eviction Bill in Connecticut

David Michel, a former Connecticut State Representative, is a co-sponsor of Senate Bill 143 — a “Just Cause” eviction bill — which would require landlords to have a valid reason before evicting certain tenants  [Connecticut General Assembly](#).

Who is David Michel?

David Michel (born August 8, 1974) is a progressive Democrat who served in the Connecticut House of Representatives for the 146th District in Fairfield County from January 2019 to January 2025  [Wikipedia](#). He co-chaired the CT Animal Advocacy Caucus and has supported bills on ranked-choice voting, rent increase studies, banning kangaroo products, and creating an Office of the Food Access Advocate  [Wikipedia](#). Michel lost the 2024 Democratic primary for the 146th District to Eilish Collins Main  [Wikipedia](#).

The “Just Cause” Bill (SB-143)

In 2024, Michel was listed as a sponsor of **SB-143**, a Housing Committee bill that would:

1. Require “cause” for evictions of certain tenants, including families with children and tenants using rental assistance  [Connecticut General Assembly](#).
2. Expand existing protections (already in place for people with disabilities and seniors) to broader protected classes  [Connecticut General Assembly](#).
3. Aim to prevent evictions from starting unless there is a legitimate, non-retaliatory reason  [Connecticut General Assembly](#).

The bill’s stated purpose is to address housing instability and homelessness by ensuring landlords cannot evict simply because a lease ends (“no-fault” or “lapse-of-time” evictions)  [Connecticut General Assembly](#).

Support and Opposition

Supporters — including Michel, the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and city officials — argue the bill would:

4. Reduce homelessness by preventing arbitrary evictions  [Connecticut General Assembly](#).
5. Protect vulnerable tenants from displacement  [Connecticut General Assembly](#).
6. Align with Connecticut’s broader affordable housing goals  [Connecticut General Assembly](#).

Opponents — including some landlords and Republican lawmakers — argue it could:

7. Increase costs and reduce investment  [Connecticut General Assembly](#).
8. Violate property rights  [CT Mirror](#).
9. Be used to remove problem tenants, such as those making excessive noise or smoking in non-smoking areas  [CT Mirror](#).

Legislative Context

The “Just Cause” concept has been a recurring proposal in Connecticut’s General Assembly. In 2025, a similar bill stalled before a House vote; in 2026, the Housing Committee voted to advance it, and it is expected to be routed

through the Senate first  [New Haven Independent+1](#). Michel’s sponsorship in 2024 shows his ongoing

advocacy for tenant protections  [Connecticut General Assembly](#).

In summary: David Michel is a former Connecticut State Rep who has been a key advocate for “Just Cause” eviction protections, sponsoring SB-143 to expand protections beyond current disability and senior categories, with the goal of reducing housing instability and homelessness  [Wikipedia+1](#)

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