



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY FOR
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

60B WESTON STREET, HARTFORD, CT 06120-1551

JAMES D. McGAUGHEY

Executive Director

Phone: 1/860-297-4307

Confidential Fax: 1/860-297-4305

Testimony of the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities
Before the Public Safety Committee
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Submitted by James D. McGaughey
Executive Director

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on **Raised Bill No. 1093, AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUILDING CODE**. This bill makes a number of technical changes to statutes that currently refer to the State Building Code as being based on the old BOCA model code. These changes are necessary because, since its adoption in late 2005, Connecticut's new State Building Code has been based on the International Building Code, not the older BOCA code. The bill would also simplify the process by which the State Building Inspector can make annual adjustments to educational fees associated with permit applications, increases fines for people who fail to comply with orders from building officials, and makes other essentially technical changes that clarify the exclusive role of local building officials in regulating building activity. Our Office supports this bill as currently drafted.

Our Office's interest in Building Code matters centers on the Code's provisions for accessibility. The Office of the State Building Inspector and our Office are jointly charged with responsibility for reviewing and deciding on applications for exceptions ("waivers") from the accessibility requirements of the Code. We have similar responsibilities with respect to approving installation of wheelchair lifts. At the time the new Code was adopted, our two Offices also became involved in negotiations led by the Co-Chairs of the Regulation Review Committee. Advocates and representatives from the building industry and design sectors were also included. Thanks to everyone's hard work, the new Code represents a fair balance of accessibility requirements with economic realities and ever evolving building technologies. Our Office would only be concerned about this bill if an attempt were made to amend it with language that would weaken or supersede the accessibility requirements of the Code itself.

If there are any questions about our Office's comments, please let me know and I will try to answer them.