



LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

145 West Hanover Street, Trenton, NJ 08618
(609) 393-3752
www.hcdnnj.org

Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee Testimony in Support of S345, Accessory Dwelling Units Monday, March 7, 2022

Good morning, Chairperson Singleton and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Matthew Hersh, Director of Policy and Advocacy the Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey. The Network is the statewide association of nearly 300 community development corporations, individuals and other organizations that support the creation of affordable homes, economic opportunities, and strong communities. The Network is also the state's largest, funded HUD-certified housing counseling intermediary serving NJ exclusively.

We are glad to see that S345 is being heard today because we and our members view accessory dwelling units as tools for providing affordable homes. We are also encouraged by the opportunity to support permitted, additional space on single-family lots as many communities simply do not have the developable land to address their housing needs. This important option for municipalities allows for another tool in the shed to create more affordable homes.

The current discussion in the legislature is taking place around affordability, and this bill, which would allow a town to restrict ADU occupancy to low- and moderate-income residents, addresses just that. We support this legislation, although we have concerns regarding the bill's opt-out provision, which could effectively result in concentrating ADU development in low-income communities. We believe this provision undermines the potential reach and impact of this proposal, and we look forward to discussing the need to remove it with Senator Singleton and other stakeholders. I believe you will also hear from some of our allies on this specific area in more detail.

Our national partner, the National Low Income Housing Coalition, estimates that New Jersey has an affordable home deficit of more than 200,000. Every tool that the legislature creates to provide more affordable homes provides additional opportunities for New Jersey to become more affordable. We look forward to working with the bill sponsor – Chairperson Singleton – to address our concerns and enact this law.

Matthew Hersh
Director of Policy and Advocacy
Housing and Community Development Network of NJ