

MASSACHUSETTS  
**HIGHTECHNOLOGYCOUNCIL**

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**TESTIMONY**

**Statement before the Joint Committee on Housing  
In Support of:**

**House Bill 3507  
An Act to Promote Housing Choices**

**May 14, 2019**

**Mark J. Gallagher, Vice President  
Massachusetts High Technology Council**

Chairman Crighton, Chairman Honan, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you in support of House Bill 3507, an Act to Promote Housing Choices.

For the record, my name is Mark Gallagher and I am Vice President for Policy and Government Relations at the Massachusetts High Technology Council.

The Council is an organization of CEOs and senior executives representing technology companies, professional services firms, and academic and research institutions dedicated to creating and sustaining conditions that support investment and job growth in Massachusetts. Our members are growth-oriented, knowledge-intensive employers and institutions that develop, deliver and depend on technology products, services and innovations to advance their organizational objectives.

As you are no doubt aware, housing costs in Massachusetts are among the highest in the country. While increased home values provide significant economic strength and security to Massachusetts and its residents, the Commonwealth's comparatively high housing costs create disincentives for skilled workers to migrate to or remain in Massachusetts and raise impediments to employers' ability to recruit and retain talent. Consider:

- According to US Census data in MATTERS, the Council's median home values in Massachusetts are the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest in the country and nearly 30% of Massachusetts homeowners spend more than 30% of their monthly income on housing expenses.

- Massachusetts has produced an average of less than 10,000 new homes per year during the past 25 years, after producing approximately 30,000 new housing units each year for the prior four decades.
- According to US Census data, and despite the array of cranes and construction seen across much of greater Boston, Massachusetts housing production is lower than at any time since 1960.

More and more frequently, housing costs are cited by Council members and peer technology employers as an immediate and emerging risk to our region's sustained economic growth and prosperity. Just yesterday, the Council's Board of Directors convened and approved a statement in support of the legislation which I have submitted to Committee members and staff along with this testimony.

By allowing, but not requiring, municipalities to approve zoning changes by simple majority (as opposed to a two-thirds vote) and providing financial support, technical assistance and new capital grant funding, the legislation will provide cities and towns with new tools and critically needed flexibility.

These changes will create expanded opportunities for policymakers and developers to harness market dynamics to support new housing creation using proven "smart growth" principles including managed density, transit-oriented development and resilient, sustainable construction.

On behalf of the Council's members and Board of Directors, I thank you for your consideration and ask that you report the bill with a recommendation that it "ought to pass" and work with your House and Senate your colleagues to enact the bill expeditiously.