

Testimony regarding Proposed Bill 666
LCO No. 2794

AN ACT CONCERNING SAFE RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT
FACILITIES FOR EFFECTIVE RECOVERY

Good morning, my name is Jennifer Gottlieb and I am the Assistant City Manager for the City of Norwich. I am here on behalf of the City Manager who could not be here today.

The City of Norwich strongly supports the passage of the bill before you that rightfully places the responsibility for ensuring the half and ¾ way houses are safe with the party that funds them: the State of Connecticut. Most municipalities don't conduct safety inspections each time a new tenant fills a rental occupancy within the City. The City is not required to do such inspections and is not a party to the transaction that establishes the halfway houses, the State is a party to those transactions and in the best position to ensure they are done properly. It should be the responsibility of the party funding the establishment of halfway and three quarter way houses to ensure that public money and resident safety are not put in jeopardy. The federal department of Housing and Urban Development conducts such inspections on Section 8 housing, which is much more prevalent than halfway houses in order to ensure that recipients are not exposed to hazardous conditions and that public money is well spent. HUD also has extensive requirements for its other housing programs to ensure that program recipients and the public are well served. We believe that handing out public dollars for un-inspected housing is not being responsible to the residents, the taxpayers and the host municipalities.

The State also owes the host municipality notice of the establishment of recovery facilities so that local authorities may better respond to the needs of the residents and the community. Currently, the City of Norwich does not receive any formal notice about the establishment of local recovery facilities. This lack of knowledge puts us and our emergency responders at a disadvantage.

The passage of this bill will help ensure that resident safety and public investment in housing services are properly protected and will conform to well established principles of accountability in government housing programs.