

**Testimony for the record by Eddie A. Perez
Mayor, City of Hartford
Submitted to:
The Connecticut General Assembly
Committee on Planning and Development
March 3, 2008**

Hearing on R.B. 374, An Act Increasing the State Grant in Lieu of Taxes for Correctional Facilities

Hearing on R.B. 495, An Act Concerning the Public Housing Pilot Program and the Low and Moderate Income Housing Tax Abatement

Hearing on R.B. 374, An Act Concerning Financial and Management Audits of Municipalities

Good afternoon Chairman Coleman, Chairman Feltman and members of the Committee. I am Eddie Perez, Mayor of the City of Hartford and I submit this testimony in favor of the following bills.

I support R.B. 374, An Act Increasing the State Grant in Lieu of Taxes for Correctional Facilities. I commend the committee on recognizing the special demands on a municipality when it houses a correctional facility and I strongly support this bill that will increase PILOT payments to those municipalities.

I also support R.B. 495, An Act Concerning the Public Housing Pilot Program and the Low and Moderate Income Housing Tax Abatement. Last session when this PILOT was removed from the budget it was terribly burdensome on municipalities who had formerly abated property. Last year, Hartford was able to fund the difference and prevented a rent increase on some of our most vulnerable citizens. This year, as the budget is tighter, it is unclear whether or not there will be room in the City budget. Reviving this PILOT payment is vital to prevent a significant cost of living increase on hundreds of fixed income individuals.

Finally, I support R.B. 374, An Act Concerning Financial and Management Audits of Municipalities. I am very much in favor of more open and transparent government and I believe that this bill will be helpful. Although I am concerned with the constitutionality of this bill in our home-rule state, I commend the Committee on its attempt to increase public confidence with more transparency in municipal government. To that point, I hope you will consider amending this bill to exempt municipalities with independent internal audit commissions, which would enable the state to save money moving forward.

I hope you will join me in supporting these bills and consider the changes that I recommend.. Thank you.