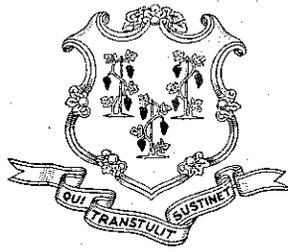


SENATOR GAYLE SLOSSBERG

Fourteenth District

Legislative Office Building
Room 2200
Hartford, CT 06106-1591
Toll-free 1-800-842-1420
Tel. (860) 240-0482
Home (203) 878-6412

Slossberg@senatedems.ct.gov
www.SenatorSlossberg.cga.ct.gov



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Appropriations

TESTIMONY

Proposed Bill 5918

AN ACT AUTHORIZING BONDS OF THE STATE FOR RESTORATION OF THE
CULTURAL ARTS CENTER ON CENTER STREET IN WEST HAVEN

Thank you Chairman LeBeau, Chairman Berger, and members of the Commerce Committee for hearing my testimony today in support of Proposed Bill No. 5918 which will authorize \$1.2 million in bond funding for renovation of the West Haven Cultural Arts Center. Especially in this difficult economic time, the arts program and the building that houses it should be viewed as the sensible investments that they are in the future of West Haven. Funding for the project has also been solicited as part of the Economic Stimulus Package proposals to both Governor Rell and to the U.S. Conference of Mayors. Corporate sponsors will be sought to offset the costs as well.

The historic 19th century structure used to house the Arts Center was purchased with seed money from the state and is a significant asset of the City of West Haven. The building is a financial investment we can not afford to neglect at this critical point in the redevelopment of West Haven. The State has poured substantial funds into a comprehensive revitalization plan for downtown West Haven and the Arts Center is a key feature of the completed vision. Other components of the project include a \$4 million streetscape improvement project and a \$100 million train station funded by both the state and federal government.

The program is also an investment in the people of West Haven. As one constituent wrote in a letter to me, "The difference between our young people and those in more affluent areas is not aptitude; it is opportunity." The Cultural Arts Center provides a creative outlet, gathering place, and source of entertainment for West Haven through performing arts, fine arts, cultural events and classes. The renovation plans are strongly supported by the community which recognizes the enormous contribution of the Arts Center to the quality of life in West Haven. After the successful completion of the West Haven revitalization, it is expected that the Arts Center will extend its reach to more substantially benefit surrounding communities as well.

Thank you for your time and consideration of a favorable vote on Proposed Bill 5918.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gayle Slossberg".