

Testimony of Mr. George Brusznicki

**Director of Weatherization, Employment & Training
For Community Renewal Team**

Committee on Energy and Technology

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Good afternoon, my name is George Brusznicki , I am the Director of Weatherization, Employment & Training for the Community Renewal Team. I am here to speak on behalf of Raised Bill 1135, An Act Concerning Energy Efficiency Investments in Underserved Communities. This is an extremely important measure that can help increase the number of homes in underserved communities which are improved through weatherization, help increase the number of well-paying jobs available in the weatherization field, and help to increase the amount of money that is invested in minority businesses – both through contracts and through a job training component.

All of this makes sense to CRT, which has been doing weatherization since the late 1970s. Last year alone, we weatherized 3,334 homes in Connecticut for low- and moderate-income households. Of this, 250 homes were weatherized with Department of Energy funding, and 3,084 with the WRAP program. As a result of the public investment that was made on their behalf, these people were able to reduce their energy consumption and increase their comfort level.

Like the members of your committee, CRT would like to increase the number of households that we can reach through weatherization, so that we can increase the number

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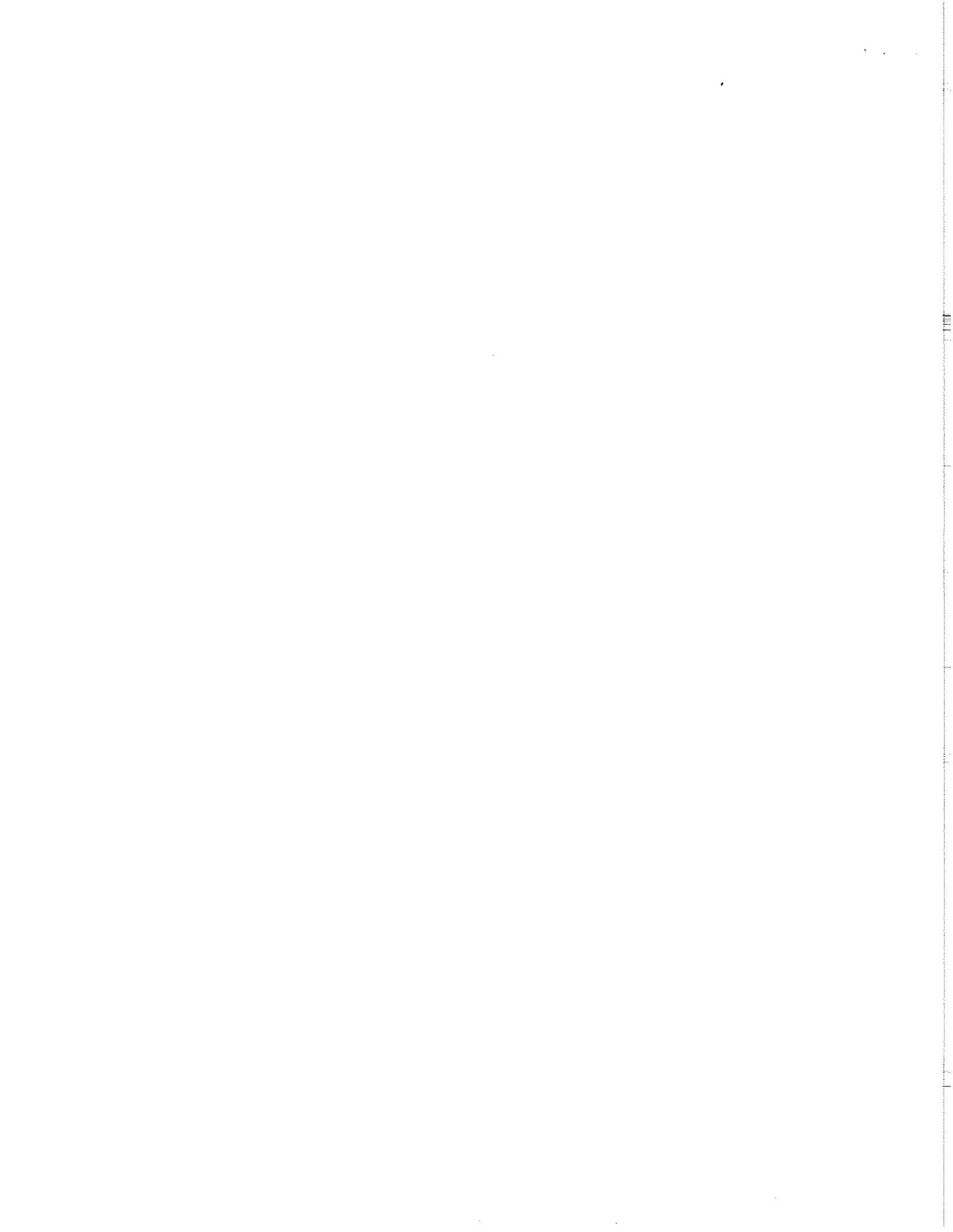
of people who enjoy those benefits. And we hope to expand the reach of this program, into more of the towns where it is needed.

As you know, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will greatly increase the funding for weatherization. In fact, the funding to the state will increase by more than six-fold. Given preliminary planning numbers, CRT alone anticipates hiring more than 50 new employees in a variety of construction trades, including both entry level and mid-level skilled labor. We are looking at the possibility of increasing our work with contractors three-fold; this will result in additional hiring by other organizations throughout the state.

The 3% set aside called for in this bill makes sense for a number of reasons:

- It will increase Agency capacity to work with contractors;
- It will expand the number of contractors eligible to perform weatherization;
- It will increase the number of homes that can be weatherized;
- It will facilitate the ability to quickly get money into the community;
- It requires additional job training for existing and potential minority business enterprises.

Recently we have had two very productive meetings with the Minority Construction Council, who will be important partners in this endeavor. CRT and its internal employment development staff will work with them and with our other partners,



including the Capital Workforce Partners and the Jobs Funnel, to ensure greater access to these contracts and increased job training.

In an environment of decreasing home improvement and construction work, this is a particularly important aspect of stimulating the economy. This action is consistent with CRT's direction, and CRT is extremely supportive of this bill. Continued support of job training, minority business communities

This bill also holds the possibility of triggering other activities across the state to bring on more contractors as property owners leverage these funds to make further improvements in their homes.

You can count on more than CRT's endorsement of this bill, you can count on our continuing support of these efforts.

