



*Advocating for Older Adults of Today and Tomorrow*

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Testimony of

Julia Evans Starr, Executive Director  
Connecticut Commission on Aging

Housing Committee

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Thank you for this opportunity to comment on *Senate Bill 28*.

As you know, the Connecticut Commission on Aging is the independent state agency solely devoted to enhancing the lives of the present and future generations of our state's older adults. For fifteen years, the Commission has served as an effective leader in statewide efforts to promote choice, independence and dignity for Connecticut's older adults and persons with disabilities.

In these difficult budget times, research-based initiatives, statewide planning efforts, vision and creative thinking are all needed to ensure a continued commitment to services and supports for individuals in need. The Connecticut Commission on Aging stands ready to assist our state in finding solutions to our fiscal problems, while keeping commitments to critical programs and services.

*Senate Bill 28: An Act Concerning Priority for Subsidized Housing by Elderly or Disabled Persons with Emergency Medical Conditions*

*~CoA Supports*

Senate Bill 28 focuses on the cases of individuals who are living in subsidized housing but who, because of medical conditions, are unable to remain in their units. Unfortunately, in Connecticut, much of the subsidized housing stock is old and persons with certain respiratory conditions may be at risk with continued exposure. When emergency situations result from these conditions, and tenants need to leave their units, the current practice is to put those tenants on the end of the subsidized housing wait list. As this Committee knows all too well, we have a shortage of housing that is both affordable and appropriate for older adults and persons with disabilities. Individuals often wait on subsidized housing wait lists for more than two years.

This commonsense bill would allow those individuals to be put at the top of that wait list instead. Doing so can ensure that individuals can move to a different unit sooner, thereby improving their health. This valid proposal is consistent with efforts, dictated by the Olmstead decision and Connecticut State Statutes §17b-337, to allow people to receive care in "the least restrictive, appropriate setting."

We ask for your support.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment today and for tackling this important issue. As always, please contact us with any questions about this issue or other aging-related issues. It's our pleasure to serve as an objective, nonpartisan resource to you.

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