

Housing Committee Public Hearing 2.19.2009

HB 5071 AN ACT CONCERNING THE SUPPORTIVE HOUSING INITIATIVE.

My name is Jennifer Mitchell and I am a single mother of 4 children. I am writing this letter to you regarding the Supportive Housing Initiative for Families Program. It is of great concern to me that the Governor did not release the funding for the Next Steps 3 program. While I am one of the families that currently have a housing voucher for supportive housing it is disheartening to know that other families will not receive the same second chance that I did.

Let me take this opportunity to explain a little of my situation to you in the hopes that you may better understand why the Supportive Housing (Next Step 3) is an invaluable service to those of us who need a second chance.

I am a 34 year old single mother of 4 children and I had the phenomenal opportunity to go through the Thames River Family Program (TRFP). This is a program for single mother's who some where in life they lost their way. TRFP helps you get back on the right track and teaches you skills in areas like personal self growth, education, home management and money management just to name a few. Before I was accepted into this program I was homeless with 3 older children and a newborn preemie. Was I resistant to Thames River Family Program at first? Absolutley!!

Gradually I opened up and allowed these women to help me get out of my own way. A way that I might add would have definitely ended up with me bouncing back and forth from shelter to shelter from state to state. I am proud to say that I have graduated from the program and was lucky enough to receive a housing voucher for the Supportive Housing Program and as I am currently unemployed due to medical problems this voucher was and is a Godsend! The truth of the matter is that if you vote to no longer return the funding to this supportive housing then there will be people who will not get the second chance that I did.

If that happens then these families will be just another number added to the homelessness count and really, isn't this what this program was designed to prevent? Supportive Housing vouchers allow people to remain in their homes and OUT of the shelters and the streets. It allows you to keep your dignity and helps you feel that not only can you keep a roof over your families head you can continue to hold a job and support your family. Feeling safe in the fact that with the discounted rent you will be able to hold it together without feeling that at any moment you may lose your place to live. Whether you work or go to school it is a good feeling to know that you have a home that you can come home too!! I urge you to please support bill number 5071 and return the funding for the Next Step 3 Supportive Housing so that others will have the same opportunities that myself and my children have had!

Jennifer Mitchell Baltic Connecticut