

S.B. No 868
In Favor of

Testimony by Rose Price
Before the Housing Committee of the Connecticut Legislature
Thursday, February 19, 2009

Good morning, ladies and gentleman of the Legislature. My name is Rose Price. I am the President of the Chester Bowles Park Tenants Association and a Board member of the PHRN, the Connecticut Public Housing Resident Network.

I am here to support the bill to restore affordable housing PILOT's to the 2010 and 2011 state budgets – Raised Bill #868. As you know, Governor Rell removed affordable housing PILOT's from her 2010 and 2011 budgets that she presented to the Legislature on February 4, 2009.

I am also here to support Raised Bill #867, Proposed Bill #5072, and Proposed Bill #5074.

All three bills propose the allocation of critical resources to preserve our state public housing system. Bill #5072 would target resources to state moderate rental communities, while Bill #5074 would target resources specifically to state moderate rental communities in Hartford. My community, Chester Bowles Park, and our sister community Westbrook Village, desperately need the resources that would be provided in Bill #5074.

Let me talk to you about Bowles Park where I live. We have documented mold and mildew problems in at least 80% of all occupied units. Our pipes leak, our ceilings are damaged, we are overrun with mice, and when it rains or snows, we become prisoners in our own homes because our walkways become flooded with water during warm weather or iced over during the cold winter months. Dozens of units are vacant, in desperate need of repair.

We have been working on a redevelopment plan for Bowles Park and Westbrook Village, our sister community, for nearly 10 years. We have a developer ready to go, Corcoran Jennison, chosen with the help of a Local Planning Committee that included residents living at Bowles Park and Westbrook Village and many community representatives. The process has stalled and we are very anxious to get it up and moving again. We do not want to move even one step backwards at this point in time. It is time to get the redevelopment project rolling. We believe that Bill # 5074 will help our communities. That is why it is so important to us.

My last comment is that PILOT funds must be restored. At Bowles Park, we are elderly, sick, disabled, retired, and low wage workers. We cannot pay rent increases. In addition to rent, we pay our own heat and electricity bills and you know that they are going up all the time. Our household budgets are maxed out. There is no wiggle room there. Please guarantee us that PILOT will be included in the state budget this year and next year.

Thank you.