

Written Testimony of Attorney Keith K. Fuller Concerning the Appropriations Request by the CT Fair Housing Center

Attorney Keith K. Fuller respectfully submits this written testimony in support of the CT Fair Housing Center's ("CT Fair Housing") request for funding through the Department of Economic and Community Development.

I am an attorney with a principal law office in Enfield, CT. A substantial portion of my practice involves foreclosure prevention work on behalf of homeowners. Because of my experience with foreclosure-related matters, I have been honored to be appointed as Co-Chair of the Connecticut Bar Association's Foreclosure Prevention Pro Bono Panel and work as special counsel to CT Fair Housing in connection with its foreclosure prevention work.

For the past several years, CT Fair Housing has been an integral component in foreclosure prevention issues throughout the State of Connecticut. In addition to serving as a legal resource for practitioners, housing counselors, court personnel and the public on foreclosure-related matters, CT Fair Housing coordinates a diverse panel of attorneys and paralegals who volunteer their time and services to homeowners facing foreclosure. Because CT Fair Housing is responsible for assigning cases and providing expert guidance to volunteers, any loss of funding by CT Fair Housing is likely to end the organized pro bono efforts on behalf of homeowners in need.

I have handled numerous foreclosure cases on a pro bono basis as a member of the foreclosure prevention pro bono panel over the past several years. Because there are so many homeowners who contact the CT Fair Housing seeking assistance, it is not possible for it to keep up with the demand for legal representation, so reliance on pro bono attorneys is essential. I have also participated regularly in the CT Fair Housing's Homeowner's Foreclosure Prevention Clinics and seen them to be a tremendous benefit to many homeowners. There are no other programs similar to the clinics throughout the state. The loss of a homeowner's ability to get the information and attention they receive at the clinics would be devastating.

In addition to all of the above, I have recently been involved with the CT Fair Housing Center's development of the Guide to foreclosure prevention. The Guide is an invaluable tool to assist homeowners, housing counselors and even attorneys in the foreclosure prevention process. I expect it will prove to be a tremendous resource for thousands of people facing foreclosure, but it will need to be updated as the law and process changes, so adequate funding will be necessary in order to keep that resource available to the people who will come to rely on it.

In conclusion, our volunteers' participation in foreclosure prevention activities and homeowners' reliance on CT Fair Housing as central resource would not be possible without the expert assistance provided by the attorneys and staff there. I respectfully urge you to help CT Fair Housing help Connecticut's most vulnerable homeowners by continuing their state funding.

- Keith K. Fuller