TESTIMONY OF JACKIE GRANT
IN SUPPORT OF CONTINUED FUNDING FOR THE
CONNECTICUT FAIR HOUSING CENTER

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to tell you about the Connecticut Fair Housing Center. The Connecticut Fair Housing Center helped me with discrimination cases against two landlords in New Haven and West Haven who refused to rent to me. I know that the Center has helped other people like me and I ask that that this Committee will support continued funding of $227,500 for the Center.

I am currently disabled and retired from the State Judicial Marshall's office. Until recently, I had a Section 8 rental assistance voucher which assisted me in paying the rent. In March 2005, I was trying to find a new apartment. I saw an advertisement in the New Haven Register for a one-bedroom apartment in New Haven. I called the number listed in the advertisement and asked about the apartment. During the telephone conversation I was informed that there were two apartments vacant and that I would be shown both at my scheduled visit. During my tour, the man who was showing me around asked me if I worked. I told him that I did not work. I then explained that my rent was taken care of by a Section 8 voucher. The man told me that he does not accept Section 8 vouchers. He explained that approximately six or seven years ago he had a tenant with Section 8 and that it was too much paper work. He told me that he didn't want to deal with the hassle of participating in the Section 8 program.

I was very upset by his statements. During my housing search, many landlords had told me they did not accept Section 8 and I was getting worried I would never find a new apartment. In May 2006, I was still looking for an apartment. I saw an advertisement in the paper for a one-bedroom apartment in West Haven. When I explained to the man who answered the phone that I would pay the rent with my Section 8 voucher, he told me the owner did not accept Section 8.

He went on to explain that if they accepted my voucher, they would have to accept others with Section 8. Accepting Section 8 would make the complex go downhill.

I called the Connecticut Fair Housing Center each time I experienced discrimination. Each time they investigated my complaints using fair housing testing. They asked trained testers to contact each landlord to ask if he would rent to them. When asked how they would pay the rent, some testers said they had Section 8 vouchers while others said they would pay rent from their wages. The testers who offered to pay rent with a Section 8 voucher were told the owner did not take Section 8 while the testers without Section 8 were offered the opportunity to look at the apartments. With this proof, the Center filed complaints against both owners at the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities. There, it didn't matter that the owners said I was lying. I had other people who had been told the owners would not take Section 8 who were willing to testify on my behalf. In addition, the Connecticut Fair Housing Center's lawyer was able to explain my rights to me and represented me at the CHRO.

These cases were resolved favorably and as a result of the Center's help, these landlords will never tell another person that he doesn't take Section 8. I urge you to provide funding for the Connecticut Fair Housing Center so that they can continue to help people like me who cannot find decent, affordable housing because of discrimination. Thank you for your attention.