

Connecticut Bonding Public Hearing – March 22, 2010

SB #25 / Section 298 – An Act Authorizing and Adjusting Bonds of the State for Capital Improvements, Transportation and Other Purposes.

I am Claire Phelan, Chairperson of the Board of Directors of Bridges—a non-profit Community Support System. We provide essential mental health and addiction services that impact the lives and welfare of many adults and children in our region. They come to us looking for the professional and caring help we provide.

I am a life-long resident of Milford and remember when Bridges was founded in 1957. I remember the humble beginnings of Milford Mental Health Center that has grown and embraced a comprehensive range of services and has become a Bridge and has given hope for a restored life for thousands of special needs individuals in our community.

The need for additional professional staff grew and appropriate medical space has become crucial as the number of clients we now serve reached 5,000 this past year. Over 70% of our operating funds come from State grants through contracts with DCF, DDS, DMHAS and DSS. We are a working partner with the State of Connecticut providing essential and critical healthcare services.

The serious lack of space has been problematic to the Bridges Board of Directors and has been addressed in the planning process for a number of years. We have found that renting or leasing space is draining and is not cost effective. It well exceeds our bonding request. It is also problematic because it decentralizes services and results in duplicate efforts and resources to administer and coordinate care for our clients.

We appreciate that the State has recognized our growth as well as the need to expand and has already invested in the property.

We have requested a \$600,000 bonding grant to develop property adjacent to our facility. It is a prudent project, cost effective, essential and also critical to Bridges' ability to continue providing behavioral healthcare services to our area residents. It is a sound investment not only in our healthcare system, but also in the promotion of local construction jobs and community investment, which is so urgently needed in today's economy.

Respectfully,



Claire C. Phelan

Resident of Milford and Board Chairperson of Bridges...A Community Support System, Inc.
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