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To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Dan Blinn and I submit this testimony in support of renewing funding for the Connecticut Fair Housing. As one of a handful of lawyers in the state handling cases on behalf of consumers, I understand first-hand the importance the Center's work with people in danger of losing their homes to foreclosure. The services the Connecticut Fair Housing Center provides are critical and cutting funding for them in the midst of the foreclosure crisis would be shortsighted.

Even before the foreclosure and subprime lending crises made headlines, the Center was on the frontlines educating consumers about the dangers of predatory lending, representing borrowers in court, and organizing state agencies, responsible lenders, and other non-profits to address the issue of unfair lending.

Once the foreclosure crisis hit Connecticut, the Center could build on this network of agencies and organizations to work on forward-thinking public policies to protect borrowers, deliver legal services to people facing foreclosure through a network of pro bono attorneys, and teach classes on the foreclosure process to homeowners.

The Foreclosure Prevention Pro Bono Panel is worth particular mention. In partnership with the Connecticut Bar Association the Center recruited and trained a network of attorneys to represent people facing foreclosure. The Center matches homeowners with volunteer lawyers and provides on-going expert legal advice throughout the duration of the case. Without the Pro Bono Panel many more homeowners would be forced to navigate the legal system without a lawyer and, in my estimation, increase the likelihood of losing their home.

As a lawyer who has taken on pro bono matters with the Center, I feel it is important to address the Center's ability to leverage resources to assist with their mission of fighting discrimination and foreclosures. Last year alone volunteer attorneys donated over \$1.5 million of legal time to the Center by providing free legal representation to the Center's clients. This means that the State is essentially getting a fabulous return on its investment.

I urge the Appropriations Committee to restore the Center's funding. Now is not the time to cut funding to one of the only legal non-profits providing services to homeowners facing foreclosure.

Very Truly Yours,



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