



# SOUTH PARK INN

Programs for Homeless Men, Women and Children  
Emergency Shelter \* Transitional Living \* Plimpton House

*To: Senator Harp and Representative Walker and members of the Committee*

Regarding: HB 6380, An act concerning the Budget for the Biennium ending June 30, 2013

From: Brian Baker, Assistant Director, South Park Inn

Date: March 4, 2011

It is with great pleasure that I have the opportunity to speak before this Committee concerning HB 6380. As the Assistant Director of the South Park Inn shelter and an employee of a small non-profit homeless shelter in Hartford for 27 years I have had the pleasure and honor to serve the needs of over 40,000 men, women and children. With the help of thousands of volunteers and personal sacrifices we have added a wide array of services to meet the needs of the 153 people we shelter nightly.

As an essential service to the greater community we would like to thank this Committee for your long standing commitment of avoiding balancing the Budget on the backs of the poor. We do however recognize that the Governor's biennial budget does not recommend a cost of living increase for nonprofits nor makes across the board cuts to our services. As you may be well aware nonprofits have not received an increase since July 2007 with a 20 year average cost of living increase of less than 1%. We have essentially been flat funded.

The increase in demand for shelter has never been higher. In 2010 alone emergency shelters in Connecticut served 11,700 people. On most nights our Hartford network of shelters are at capacity and just last year South Park Inn turned away 3176 people. The increase in demand has strained our resources and is coupled with a decrease in donations and inflation in the price of food, utilities, fuel and extra staff needed to run the shelter.

In Massachusetts the State has shelter on demand and spends roughly 120 million dollars a year on homeless services. In contrast we spend 10 million dollars a year on shelter, transitional housing and supporting domestic violence services. How we provide what we provide is a testimony to the commitments made by many of our citizens.

We are glad that the Governor has recommended funding for new supportive housing and RAP certificates. These are two essential elements to ending homelessness in our state. We urge the Committee to support these recommendations.

We want to thank the Committee for recognizing our plight with having to do more with less and want to thank you for remaining supportive in any manner possible. We also thank Governor Malloy for his recognition of the critical importance of housing and homeless services and urge the Committee to support his recommendations in this area.

