

March 7, 2011

Good Afternoon Chairs and Members of the Finance Committee. My name is Julio Cruz, Jr and I live in Hartford Connecticut. I am here to testify in support of Senate Bill 1008, the bonding bill that provides money for affordable and supportive housing.

I am a member of the FUSE program through Chrysalis Center. FUSE stands for Frequent Users of Service Enhancements and it works with people who are stuck in the cycle of incarceration and homelessness. I had been homeless for six years prior to entering the FUSE supportive housing program.

It is really quite easy to become homeless. All you need to do is lose a job, split up with a spouse, or develop a long term illness. Once you become homeless it is nearly impossible to change that status.

Being homeless means not having choices. You do not have the choice of where to sleep, when to rest (we are kicked out of the shelter every morning), your choices about what and when to eat are taken away. Your self respect and self value is taken away. Without Supportive Housing and the additional services I receive, none of this would have been possible. Thank you for letting me testify here today.

Julio Cruz, Jr

Hartford,CT