

Testimony of Amanda Girardin
Vote Yes for: H.B. 6052 An Act Concerning Supportive Housing
Public Hearing, March 1, 2011

Good morning honorable members of the Housing Committee. My name is Amanda Girardin; I am a student at the UConn School of Social Work doing my internship with the Middlesex Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness. I am here today on behalf of myself and the homeless consumers that I work with, to urge you to vote yes for House Bill 6052, An Act Concerning Supportive Housing.

The mission of the Middlesex County Coalition of Housing and Homelessness, that implements the Ten Year Plan, is to end homelessness in the county by 2018. This mission is directly aligned with the goal of this bill, which is to create more supportive housing units in order to end long term homelessness. While the long-term, chronically homeless make up a minority of the overall homeless population, they use the most public and emergency services, incurring the greatest cost burden on society. They have the highest rates of mental disorders, substance abuse, run-ins with law enforcement, visits to the emergency room and inpatient care.

Research shows that permanent supportive housing is a solution that works to get this population off of our streets, living stably and more independently. What's even better is that it is cost effective. According to the dissertation work of Ron Krom, Executive Director of St. Vincent DePaul in Middletown, supportive housing can save society thousands of dollars annually. His case study showed that one chronically homeless man used \$90,740 worth of ER, shelter, case management and ambulance services in one year alone. Placing him in supportive housing the following year cost only \$17,480, an 80% reduction in cost! Once in supportive housing people can obtain the stability to seek employment, or further their education and see improvements in their health.

Requiring all housing projects that receive state funding to set-aside 10% of housing units as supportive housing units targeted to homeless individuals with service needs, will help Connecticut move from its current 4,400 units of supportive housing to its goal of 10,000 units. While wholeheartedly supporting this bill, I have also heard the concerns of the landlords while working on the Ten Year Plan. I urge you to remember when implementing this bill, to work with existing continuums of care to create a plan to ensure services are available for these units. I also would also remind you that supportive housing is by definition affordable and thus would encourage you to support additional funding for RAP and Section 8 vouchers as well as Shelter + Care monies to ensure that this collaboration with private landlords is successful for all involved.

I would like to thank Senator Paul Doyle for being a loyal and active member of the Middlesex Ten Year plan and for his continued support in our efforts. Please feel free to contact me in the future for more information on issues related to housing and homelessness or for clarification of the Coalitions position on these issues. Again, on behalf of myself, and the homeless people I work with, please vote yes for House Bill 6052. Thank you for your time.

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