

**Testimony of Ms. Daisy Franklin before the Connecticut Legislature's
Housing Committee in Support of House Bill #6461, Senate Bill #1075, & Senate Bill #1076
March 1, 2011**

Hello. My name is Daisy Franklin. I am a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher resident from Norwalk and the Vice President of the Connecticut Public Housing Resident Network, Inc. (PHRN). I am here to speak in support of three bills that are before your Committee: 1) House Bill #6461, 2) Senate Bill #1076, and 3) Senate Bill #1075. Our support for all three bills represents our belief in ourselves, our desire for a stronger voice in our communities and a greater respect for the importance of our rights.

PHRN's support of House Bill #6461, An Act Concerning the Selection of Tenant Commissioners, is very simple. We believe that public housing residents deserve the right to vote for the Tenant Commissioner who will represent them on their housing authority board of commissioners as a matter of democratic principle. Many of our members have watched in frustration as appointed Tenant Commissioners have made decisions in their Commissioner capacity that were not in the best interest of their fellow residents because their first allegiance was pledged to the appointing power. It is time to put the principle of representative democracy to work in our public housing communities. We respectfully encourage this Committee to lead the way in granting public housing residents the democratic right to vote for their Tenant Commissioner. It is a concept that is as "red, white and blue" American as good old-fashioned apple pie.

PHRN's support of Senate Bill # 1076, An Act Concerning Resident Participation in the Revitalization of Public Housing, is based on our experience with revitalization planning processes in five different public housing communities in five different Connecticut cities and towns over the last few years. In Bowles Park and Westbrook Village in Hartford, Corbin Heights Pinnacle Heights Extension in New Britain, Chamberlain Heights in Meriden, and the Allen O'Neill Homes in Darien, groups of thoughtful committed public housing residents attempted to participate in the planning processes for the revitalization of their communities. Where our members were able to achieve a guaranteed seat at the table, their participation was welcomed, respected, and genuine. Where their efforts were rejected, our members were left out of the process. How unfair that some public housing residents in our state have the opportunity to participate in the redevelopment of their communities while other public housing residents do not have the same opportunity through no fault of their own! We believe that Bill #1076 will put all public housing families and communities on equal footing regarding their right to participate in the planning and implementation process to revitalize their communities. It will establish a common standard by which residents, owners, and developers will be able to move forward together.

And finally, PHRN supports Senate Bill # 1075, An Act Concerning public Housing Grievance Procedures. Section 8-68f of the Connecticut General Statutes called for the establishment of minimum standards for tenants rights and grievance procedure protections by the Commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development nearly 20 years ago. The time to comply with the law is overdue.

Thank you very much for allowing me this opportunity to testify before your committee.