

Testimony of Michael Williams

In Support of Mobility Security Deposit Guarantees

My name is Michael Williams and I am here today to speak in support of adding a mobility component to the Security Deposit Guarantee Program. I grew up in the Southfield Village public housing project in Stamford, known as one of the most dangerous in the city. As a child, I knew I wanted to grow up to live in a safer environment. I am now a divorced father of two children – a 16 year-old boy and a 12 year-old girl and I want the same kind of safety for my kids.

I waited on the Section 8 waiting list for five years but then lost my voucher because with child support payment obligations I was unable to save for a security deposit. This has been devastating to me because it has meant that I am essentially homeless, shuffling between relatives' homes and, most importantly, unable to see my children on a regular basis. I had been looking forward to the day when my children could stay with me on the weekends in my own place. This has been especially hard for my son who is at an age where he really needs his father in his life.

I had hoped to make a mobility move from a tough area of Bridgeport to an area near the Trumbull line that would be safe for my kids and near to their mother's place in Trumbull. I was looking forward to working with New Opportunities of Waterbury, one of the mobility counseling programs in the state, to make this move. Setting aside some Security Deposit Guarantees for mobility programs to help people like me make moves to safer neighborhoods with better schools would have made a world of difference to me and my family. Please approve this small change to the statute so other families might be helped.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.