

**Testimony of Shella Runlett of HOME, Inc.**  
**In Support of Mobility Security Deposit Guarantees, S.B. 1146 (Raised)**

My name is Shella Runlett and I am the Director of Housing Counseling Programs at Housing Operations Management Enterprises Inc. – HOME, Inc. -- an organization dedicated to providing housing for low-to-very-low income people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. One of our programs at HOME, Inc. provides housing search assistance for people using government housing subsidies interested in moving to lower poverty areas. I am here today to testify in support of S.B. 1146 which reserves 10% of the funding for the Security Deposit Guarantee Program for families working with mobility counselors to make moves to lower poverty areas.

The Security Deposit Guarantee Program, which allows DSS to guarantee the security deposit for people using government housing subsidies is critical to our clientele moving to lower poverty areas. During the last year, the average annual income of our clients was \$12,555. You can see why a housing subsidy is so crucial for them. Most landlords require two months' security deposit. This means that a family with an income of \$12,555 a year (or less) with a 3 bedroom voucher who finds an apartment for \$1,250 a month in a safe, decent area, will have to come up with a lump sum security deposit payment of \$2,500. In all likelihood, if they could come up with \$2500 cash for a security deposit, they wouldn't need the subsidy in the first place!

Allocating a modest portion of this program for people making “mobility moves,” which are moves to lower poverty areas, helps us give our clients choices about where they live, deconcentrates poverty and combats racial isolation. Our clients come to us because they have decided they want to move to areas where their kids can go to thriving schools, play outside and join sports teams. This does not seem like too much to ask for. I hope you will support S.B.1146 and open opportunities for people on Section 8 and RAP.