

**Testimony of Donna Parris  
In support of Connecticut Fair Housing Center**

Senator Harp, Representative Walker, and members of the Committee, My name is Donna Parris, and I live in Dayville, CT. I am here in support of continued funding for the Connecticut Fair Housing Center. Thank you for allowing me to tell my story.

In November of 2006, I bought a modular home in Dayville, I own the home outright and pay rent for the land it sits on. The landlord is responsible for the septic system. Since 2009, the septic system has overflowed more than a dozen times, causing me great physical pain. The frequent incidences of septic overflow have exacerbated my disabilities to the point that, on several occasions, I have become violently ill and required medical attention. I complained about the ongoing problems to my landlord and that is when the retaliation started.

I am a person with disabilities. Because of my disabilities, which cause me to pass out and lose sensation in my hands and feet, as well as other things, my doctor recommended that I have a live-in aide. If I did not have that aide I would be unable to maintain a daily schedule, which includes occasionally taking care of my two grandchildren, or I could suffer physical injury. When I requested permission to have a live-in aide, with a letter from my doctor citing a medical need for a live-in aide, my landlord responded with an ultimatum: either I assume the cost for the pumping out the septic system or they would evict me for having a live in aide and other reasons. When I refused to agree to pay for the septic repairs, my landlord tried to evict me.

I knew that was wrong, and attempted at that point to find a lawyer to help me. I could not find anyone to take my case. I actually found CT Fair Housing Center through an attorney in Rhode Island!

Since taking my case, the Fair Housing Center has filed a consumer protection complaint and federal lawsuit on my behalf, and they have succeeded in having the eviction proceedings withdrawn pursuant to a court order. My landlord also finally fixed my septic problems.

Last spring, the Federal District Court in Connecticut held a trial in my case and just this past week, the court entered final judgment in my favor. The Court awarded me over \$262,000 for the financial loss, physical pain and emotional suffering I experienced. We prevailed on all of our claims. Even after the trial, while we were waiting for the Court to rule, the Fair Housing Center, filed papers with the Court and made the Defendants come back to court when they stopped taking care of the Park. The Center's attorneys came back out to the park and met with me and several other park residents. After this hearing, the Defendants have done a better job maintaining the Park.

If it were not for the work of the Connecticut Fair Housing Center, I would not have been able to deal with all that has happened to me over the last 3 years, and I am grateful for their help.

Thank you for supporting their work in the past, and I hope you can continue to support the work of the Center, I don't know what I would have done without them.