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**Testimony of Joseph K. Scully Submitted to the
Appropriations Committee of the Connecticut State Legislature in Support of the
Connecticut Fair Housing Center**

Senator Harp, Representative Walker, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify this evening. My name is Joseph Scully and I am a Partner at Day Pitney, LLP in Hartford. I wish to testify in support of renewed funding for the Connecticut Fair Housing Center.

In my nearly 12 years of practice, I have worked primarily as a litigator in my firm's Commercial Litigation Department. I like to dedicate a portion of my practice to providing free legal representation for worthy causes. Along with others at Day Pitney, I am currently representing the Connecticut Fair Housing Center in a case against the owner and manager of multiple properties in the Hartford area who have repeatedly discriminated against applicants based on their source of income, which is illegal in Connecticut. This discrimination has had a particularly devastating impact on people with disabilities who receive financial support through government programs. With the assistance of Day Pitney, the Center filed suit in U.S. District Court and the case is currently pending. As part of its investigation, the Center uncovered a consistent pattern of discriminatory conduct by the defendants. The suit seeks both compensatory and punitive damages.

Upon becoming involved with the Connecticut Fair Housing Center, I was immediately impressed with the depth and substance of the Center's research into this matter, which consisted of a multi-month investigation that uncovered continued violations of federal and state antidiscrimination statutes. I have also developed a great respect for the Center's attorneys whose legal skills and dedication assists thousands of clients facing housing discrimination and foreclosure.

Of particular note in lean budget times is that the Connecticut Fair Housing Center leverages the pro bono resources of law firms and attorneys across the state. Since receiving State funding private attorneys have volunteered over \$2 million in pro bono time to the Center's clients, the majority of whom are low-income.

In summary, the Center's work not only provides great benefits to its clients, but its efforts to obtain pro bono counsel also bring tremendous resources to bear on behalf of citizens of Connecticut who have faced discrimination. Without continued State funding, the Center's ability to leverage these types of resources will be severely hampered.

I strongly encourage the Appropriations Committee to renew funding for the Connecticut Fair Housing Center. An investment to discourage housing discrimination at a time when economic circumstances will compel unprecedented numbers of people to seek alternative housing is crucial.