

Testimony of Elizabeth Aubin

elizabeth.aubin@uconn.edu/ 860-922-9684

HB 5014

Good evening Senator Harp, Representative Walker, and distinguished Appropriations Committee members. My name is Elizabeth Aubin, I am a graduate student at UConn School of Social Work and intern at Journey Home, the agency which oversees Hartford's Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness. I am here tonight in support of the Governor's Proposed Budget as written in House Bill Number 5014- An Act Making Adjustments to State Expenditures and Revenues as it pertains to housing programs.

In working with homeless and formerly homeless individuals I have come to recognize the need for increased supportive and affordable housing in the state. The overall 70 million dollars in bonding for affordable housing has the power to enhance lives across the state. In 2011 a Connecticut household would have to earn \$23/ hour to afford a 2-bedroom apartment at fair market rent (FMR). While this may not seem like much money, it requires close to 3 full-time salaries at minimum wage. The proposed RAP vouchers for public housing would ease the housing cost burden for 150 struggling families statewide. They would also help to decrease public housing waitlists which can be anywhere from several months to several years and provide more individuals and families with permanent residences. The 30 million dollars in bonding for public housing would improve quality of life for many of Connecticut's residents.

In 2011 in the Greater Hartford Region there were 2736 adults experiencing homelessness, not including an additional 375 children under the age of 18. Finding and keeping housing can be very difficult for many families who have multiple barriers to housing including mental illness, substance abuse issues and physical disabilities. Coupled with low paying jobs, families can struggle to stay housed from month to month. The proposed 150 RAP vouchers for permanent supportive housing, when combined with comprehensive services, will allow individuals and families to have the opportunity to stabilize their lives in all areas so that they able to become more self-sufficient in the future. Supportive housing is also a cost effective solution to homelessness when compared to emergency shelter or other expensive services which these families often utilize.

This being said, I commend Governor Malloy on his Affordable Housing Initiative. I ask you to please approve House Bill Number 5014- An Act Making Adjustments to State Expenditures and Revenues as it pertains to housing programs. Thank you for this opportunity and for your time tonight.