



Testimony before the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee  
James White, President - Publicly-assisted Housing Resident Network, PHRN,  
**in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 25**  
March 12, 2012

Senator Daily, Representative Widlitz and members of the Committee:

Good afternoon. My name is James White and I live at 22 Lourdes Court in Meriden, Connecticut. I am the President of the Publicly-Assisted Housing Resident Network (PHRN) and the Resident Commissioner for the Meriden Housing Authority. PHRN is a statewide organization made up of residents in both state and federal public housing who work together to not just talk about the problems in public housing but, more importantly, work on the solutions to those problems. We are all bound by a common vision: to assure the rights of public housing residents to have a seat at the table in the governance of their housing, and a voice in matters that concern their tenancy.

I would like to state my strong and enthusiastic support for Senate Bill 25, which provides \$30 million in new bond funds for public housing revitalization. This is the first down payment on the Governor Malloy's 10-year, \$300 million plan to preserve and improve state-funded housing. This investment is long overdue

There are more than 14,000 families, seniors and people with disabilities living in housing that was built with the help of state financing. They are working families struggling to make ends meet and people living on fixed incomes who simply cannot afford other housing. Public and assisted housing is located in 98 cities and towns in every part of the state. But years of neglect and lack of funds have resulted in desperate problems. The Connecticut Housing Finance Authority and Department of Economic and Community Development have known for many, many years that most of the portfolio needs moderate or substantial revitalization. The 17,000 housing units we once had in this portfolio have been whittled down to about 14,000. With so many families struggling in this economy, we cannot afford to lose a single unit of valuable affordable housing.

All across Connecticut, residents of public housing are actively involved in making their communities better places to live. They care deeply and work hard to improve the conditions of public housing. They want their children to live in an environment that is safe and decent. Governor Malloy proposes \$300 million in bond financing over the next ten years to preserve and revitalize this housing stock, protecting our homes and guarding over fifty years of state housing investments. I urge you to support this proposal.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

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