



Connecticut Chapter
National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials
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***Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee
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*Written Testimony submitted by
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On behalf of the membership of Conn-NAHRO*

Conn-NAHRO is the Connecticut chapter of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials; its membership is comprised of Public Housing Authorities and other individuals and organizations involved in affordable housing.

Good afternoon Co-Chairs Daily and Widlitz and members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee:

My name is Jeffrey Arn, I am the current Vice President of Housing and Legislation for Connecticut-NAHRO, I am the Executive Director of the Vernon Housing Authority and I also volunteer as a Commissioner for the Coventry Housing Authority. I am here in support of Senate Bill No. 25, Section 32, which will provide bonding for state of Connecticut public housing revitalization.

I have been working in the public housing industry in Connecticut for the past seventeen years and this is the first time in my tenure I have seen this level of financial commitment proposed to help sustain our State public housing properties. This is a noble first step towards sustaining the long term viability of the over 13,000 state public housing units.

As the preeminent association of public housing authority professionals in the State, we at CONN-NAHRO are intimately aware of the vast need for an influx of capital improvement funds to reinvigorate our aging state public housing stock. As you may know, State Housing is not subsidized and must survive on the rents received from the elderly, disabled and low income families to whom we provide housing. Unfortunately, due to the lack of subsidy from the State the only way we

can currently raise the funds needed to perform major maintenance and repairs is to increase the base rents of those we serve. Disappointingly, these are the people that can least afford to be paying for this, especially in this economy. It is unsuitable to keep raising rents when incomes are stagnating or going down. There becomes a threshold where tenants on fixed incomes can no longer afford the ever increasing base rents that are needed to sustain a property. This is causing situations which may leave Housing Authorities with vacancies which it cannot fill and more importantly people without a place to live.

These circumstances have seemed almost insurmountable for many housing authorities in the state and have led many to ponder the fate of our state public housing and those that reside these communities. Due to these reasons we at CONN-NAHRO are enthusiastically supporting the infusion of bond money that Senate Bill 25, section 32 will generate. This will be a tremendous start to provide needed capital improvements without increasing rents to those that can least afford it. We ask that you please consider the plight of the residents of state of Connecticut public housing and support this bond funding and future funding proposed by the Governor to sustain these properties. We at Conn-NAHRO are hopeful that this will lead to a complete capital needs assessment of our state public housing stock and a formula driven funding program for needed capital improvements.

I thank you for this opportunity to speak before you today and I would be happy to entertain any questions you may have.