



Testimony of Betsy Crum
Executive Director, Connecticut Housing Coalition

Support: S.B. 25 - AN ACT AUTHORIZING AND ADJUSTING BONDS OF THE STATE FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS, TRANSPORTATION AND OTHER PURPOSES.

Senator Daily, Representative Widlitz and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.

My name is Betsy Crum and I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Housing Coalition. The Coalition represents the broad, vibrant network of community-based affordable housing activity across the state. Our more than 250 member organizations include nonprofit developers, human service agencies, resident associations, and diverse other housing practitioners and advocates. Founded in 1981, the Coalition works to expand housing opportunity and to increase the quantity and quality of affordable housing in Connecticut.

Our Coalition strongly supports S.B. 25, An Authorizing and Adjusting Bods of the State for Capital Improvements, Transportation and other Purposes, which includes significant new resources for housing and other essential investments in Connecticut's future. These include:

- \$30 Million as the first installment on the proposed 10-year, \$300 million investment to **preserve and revitalize our public and assisted housing stock**. This allocation will safeguard the state's considerable historic commitment to affordable housing, protecting over fifty years of state housing investments and safeguarding housing assets that would cost well over \$3 billion if they had to be replaced.
- \$20 Million for **new affordable housing development**, adding to the \$50 million approved in last year's budget. This financing will allow for a continuum of housing type to address the needs of young families, senior citizens and others who need affordable housing in order to relocate to and stay in Connecticut.
- \$12.5 million to develop about 50 new units of **elderly congregate housing** to allow the frail elderly to live in a residential setting with assistance such as a main meal and housekeeping services.

There are so many good reasons to support this investment. At the Connecticut Housing Coalition, we hear every day from families who need housing, and understand the critical role it plays in creating a healthy, sustainable state. I would like to highlight just a few facts:

- On average in Connecticut, a full-time worker needs to earn **\$23.58/hour** to afford a *modest* 2-bedroom apartment. **More than half (50%)** of all jobs pay less than this on an hourly basis.
- An estimated **two-thirds (66%)** of all renters in Connecticut are unable to afford the typical apartment.
- Housing is now the #1 subject of all calls for help to Infoline/211.
- Over the next ten years, it is estimated that the Governor's plan will create more than **6,700 construction industry and related jobs**.

Across the state, there is housing waiting to be revitalized and built. In 2006 the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority identified 278 properties in the state housing portfolio that required some level of modernization or renovation; that number has only grown since then. Our community development industry in Connecticut, which is comprised of nonprofits that are rooted in their cities and towns, stands ready to construct and rehabilitate housing that is high quality, small scale, well-managed and responsive to local needs and conditions. Every year, dozens of high quality affordable housing proposals go unfunded due to lack of resources.

The Governor's plan to make a sustained and significant investment in revitalizing our current stock of state-finance affordable housing and create new affordable housing for families and senior citizens signals his great commitment to the health, prosperity and sustainability of our state and to the well-being of all of the citizens within our state. I urge you to support this important bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration and I would be happy to answer any questions.