

**TESTIMONY OF BARBARA JOHNSON before the HOUSING COMMITTEE
SB 94**

March 8, 2012

My name is Barbara Johnson and I come before you today to address Raised Bill No. 94, "An Act Concerning the Equal Treatment of Renters with Mental Disabilities." I am advocating *particularly* in favor of the change in the protective language in Section 1 subsection "a", letter "C" and the proposed addition of the language that includes "mental impairment."

I am a member of Bridge House, Inc. in Bridgeport. Bridge House is a psychosocial rehabilitation program for adults recovering from the persistent effects of psychiatric illness. The mission of Bridge House is to provide a positive, encouraging environment of programs and support which give persons with psychiatric disabilities opportunities to live productive and satisfying lives.

The question of the day is not about housing people diagnosed with a mental illness...but where

The deinstitutionalization or the emptying of mental hospitals has caused the over population of jails, prisons and homeless shelters.

Those diagnosed with a mental illness, including myself, are not societies misfits who have to be subjected to the chopping block every time the budget must be cut.

We are your family, friends and lover's.

We are employed, educated and above all we're voters.

Long gone are the days when we were housed in hospitals that were unsanitary, overcrowded and unsympathetic.

We do not need more advocacy... We need action!

We do not need another hearing...we need action!

The Declaration of Independence reads:

“We hold these truth to be self evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.

We are not asking to be your neighbor's.

And no one has the right to deny us the right to be someone else's.

Thank You