



## State of Connecticut

### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Good afternoon Chairmen Fox and Coleman, Ranking Members Hetherington and Kissel, and Members of the Judiciary Committee. I am submitting this testimony in support of House Bill Number 5506: An Act Concerning Good Samaritan Protections.

I would like to thank the Judiciary Committee for raising this important House Republican proposal.

In 2011, Connecticut was hit with two major storms; Tropical Storm Irene and the October Nor'easter. These storms put Connecticut's emergency response system to the test. Record numbers of residents were without electricity and other basic necessities for several days. During this difficult time, many of Connecticut's residents came together to help one another and to volunteer their services to those in need.

In the midst of all this good work, it was reported that some shelters had turned away people with minor medical conditions because of liability concerns. People using mobility devices or respiratory equipment or medical items with rechargeable batteries were turned away from shelters, and were told to go to hospital emergency rooms. These people were not turned away because the shelters did not have the resources to help them. They were turned away because the volunteers at the shelter did not want to face potential lawsuits.

House Bill 5506 remedies this situation by providing immunity from civil damages to municipalities or nonprofit organizations that establish temporary emergency shelters when the Governor declares a civil preparedness emergency. It is our hope that with this immunity, persons with minor medical issues will not be turned away in the future.

I urge the Judiciary Committee to pass House Bill 5506. Thank you for your consideration of this legislation, and I look forward to the opportunity to debate this bill with the full General Assembly.

Thank you.