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BILL FINCH
Mayor

**TESTIMONY OF THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
TO THE
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
MONDAY, MARCH 19, 2012**

RE: H.B. 5489, AN ACT CONCERNING THE ABATEMENT OF A PUBLIC NUISANCE

Senator Coleman, Representative Fox and members of the Judiciary Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 5489.

As the chief elected official of the City of Bridgeport, one of the most common complaints my office receives from residents pertains to establishments involved in illegal activities. These establishments are a constant nuisance to the community.

My predecessors and I have done everything possible under the law to close these establishments, but we have all been unsuccessful thus far. Despite our best efforts to rid our community of these unsavory elements, we are often unable to do so because the current laws do not have enough teeth to keep these establishments closed permanently.

In many instances it is common knowledge that businesses are involved in illegal activity. These establishments and the element that they attract have a negative impact on the quality of life of the community. Parents are afraid to let their children out of the house and seniors fear leaving their homes once the street lights come on.

I believe that House Bill 5489 would give us the ability to aggressively pursue legal action against any establishment participating in criminal activity. I commend Rep. Grogins for proposing such a thoughtful and helpful piece of legislation.

House Bill 5489 will change the existing law and lower the standard of proof police have to present in order to close a business that is a chronic public nuisance. For example, a shooting occurred two weeks ago in Bridgeport's East End at a business that has been a chronic nuisance for years. Two people were injured and one person was left in critical condition. Under this law, the police would have been able to close this establishment and give the neighborhood the peace of mind and security that they have been requesting for years.

Additionally, this bill also covers a wide range of criminal activities, giving law enforcement officials the ability to investigate and close a variety of businesses that participate in illegal actions. Including a wide range of criminal and illicit activities will be very helpful in closing numerous establishments that have become public nuisances.

Closing these establishments will have a positive impact on quality of life and economic development of our communities. Eliminating these recurring criminal acts will make it possible to revitalize our communities, bringing in new investors and families while improving the environment for our current residents and businesses.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to address this issue and for allowing me to provide testimony. I encourage you to pass H.B. 5489 and should you have any further questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Sincere Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill Finch". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Bill Finch
Mayor