

**Testimony by Mary Hill before the Appropriations Committee
February 20, 2013, Public Hearing**

Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Mary Hill and I live at 53 King Court, East Hartford, Connecticut.

I live in King Court, a state public housing community that will be affected by the removal of PILOT funds from the state budget. I am President of the King Court Residents Association. I am also a member of the Connecticut Publicly Assisted Housing Resident Network (PHRN).

We are very concerned as tenants that our rents will be raised in the near future unless the PILOT money is restored. Things are very hard for us financially right now. We pay our own utility bills at King Court, in addition to 30% of our income for rent; some of us pay more than the 30%. So it is fair to say that we pay much more than 30% of our income for shelter. I myself right now am paying over the 30%. The price of electricity has gone way up and the cost of fuel to heat our homes has increased dramatically in the last few years, we also pay for our own snow removal, we too have our insurance, car repairs and all the other bills everyone else pays. A raise in rent because PILOT funds are not restored would make things much harder for everyone. Public housing and affordable public housing would be greatly impacted.

I live in public housing and I like where I live. I would like to continue to live in King Court, it represents a dignity that is priceless. It has become my community, my family. I have worked hard for many years as a community leader to guarantee that all people are afforded dignity, respect and justice. Low income families' having to take the brunt of this Pilot is not fair. Affordable housing will become impacted greatly, making it harder for our low to moderate housing residents to survive.

There are approximately 13,000 people sleeping in emergency shelters in Connecticut over the course of one year. Of this number there are 2000 children. This data was from the point in time count. If you remove the pilot, there will be more homeless with no where to go. The 40 beds alone in East Hartford's shelter have been full turning away between 80-100 people monthly.

I live on a fixed income, and my budget is very tight. My rent will go up; I may not be able to afford to pay rent anymore. I worry that I might end up homeless, along with many of my neighbors. Homeless, yes, I have been homeless with my two children ,,I know how it feels, I know what it means, Do you?

So we hope and pray that you will restore the PILOT funds to the budget so that low income families do not have to balance the budget on their shoulders alone. Please help keep Connecticut's residents in homes and off the street as homeless Save the pilot save our people.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I want to thank you all, for allowing me to speak before you today.

Mary Hill