PARTNERSHIP
FOR STRONG
COMMUNITIES

January 29, 2013

Testimony of Howard Rifkin, Executive Director, Partnership for Strong Communities on the Report of the Interagency Council on Affordable Housing

To: The Honorable Chairs, Ranking Members and Members of the Appropriations, Housing and Human Services Committees.

I am pleased to submit these written comments on the Interagency Council Report before you today. I represented The Partnership for Strong Communities as a member of the Council and am in full accord with all of the recommendations contained in the Report.

The Partnership is a non-profit dedicated to promoting solutions to prevent and end homelessness in Connecticut, educate and advocate for additional supportive and affordable housing, and for opportunities to establish mixed-income and mixed use development in town centers and around transportation stops as we build-out commuter rail and bus ways.

Having served in State Government in Connecticut for over 30 years, this is the third iteration of a Department of Housing I have seen. I think what is different now than in the past is that in establishing an Interagency Council and charging it to look at the affordable housing needs in the State, organizational issues and functions of the Department first, there is a real opportunity to make substantial progress in fulfilling Governor Malloy's commitment to Housing as a means of ending homelessness, creating more affordable units and providing the support necessary for economic opportunity and growth across the State.

What you will find as you read through the Report is a very direct, stark and challenging picture of the affordable housing needs we face. We also adopted recommendations for consolidation of all housing programs in the new Department of Housing. And we have made recommendations on some necessary personnel considerations that will support the successful implementation of a new Department.

The Interagency Council will continue its work in an advisory capacity with the Commissioner and the staff of the Department and the Partnership for Strong Communities re-commits our organization to supporting the work of this new Department as we move forward.

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