



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT**  
**OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT**

***TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE HOUSING COMMITTEE***  
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Testimony Supporting Governor's Bill No. 6366

AN ACT CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING

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Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Butler, Senator McKinney, Representative Miller, and distinguished members of the Housing Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on Governor's Bill No. 6366, AN ACT CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING.

This bill implements the Governor's budget recommendations by transferring identified programs and functions from the Departments of Social Services (DSS), Economic and Community Development (DECD), Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), and the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) to the new Department of Housing. As you know from my previous testimony before you on January 29, 2013, the Council strongly supports this bill and the implementation of the new Department of Housing.

The bill before you today incorporates the recommendations and intent described in the report of the Interagency Council on Affordable Housing which was completed with input from various stakeholders. The Council not only heard from state and national housing experts, but we also worked with state agencies to gather information on existing housing programs to produce recommendations for specific programs to transfer. Additionally, we conducted a public hearing in December to receive feedback on our preliminary recommendations. Based on these discussions, the Council developed a vision, mission, and roles for the new department and developed criteria for programs to be transferred to the new department. These recommendations are reflected in Governor's Bill 6366.

In accordance with the Council recommendations, this bill transfers: (1) all of the DECD housing programs, including capital and other funding for affordable housing, congregate housing, assisted living, fair housing, rent subsidies, housing assistance and counseling; (2) housing and homeless services from DSS;

(3) the elderly renters' rebate and housing incentive zones programs from OPM; and (4) housing subsidies from DMHAS. As the Council suggested, the bill does not transfer responsibility for residential care programs including clinical and other support services that address the behavioral health or developmental services needs of populations currently served by the Departments of Children and Families, Developmental Services, and DMHAS since these agencies have specialized expertise and experience in meeting those needs. The bill, also in accordance with Council recommendations, does not recommend transferring responsibility of any programs from the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA).

The Department of Housing demonstrates the Governor's dedication to developing a comprehensive approach to eliminating homelessness and meeting the housing needs of low- and moderate-income individuals, families, and communities within the state. Charged with providing centralized leadership for all housing-related matters, the new department's primary focus will be enhancing the supply of, and access to, safe and affordable housing in Connecticut. Establishing a new, comprehensive Department of Housing with centralized leadership is the right thing to do and the smart thing to do for the future of Connecticut's communities and people. On behalf of the Council, I applaud the Governor and the General Assembly for establishing a Connecticut Department of Housing in statute and urge you to complete the implementation of the department by passing Governor's Bill 6366.

I would like to again thank the Committee for the opportunity to present this testimony. I respectfully request the Committee take favorable action on this bill and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.