**Testimony of Shenida Taylor** **OPPOSE H.B. 6661**

**April 1, 2013**

My name is Shenida Taylor and I live in Hartford in an apartment with the Hartford Housing Authority. I work as a bus driver for the Hartford School system. I am here to oppose House Bill 6661 because it would prevent tenants like me from having their case heard in court. If this Bill had been the law a year ago, I would have been wrongly evicted and my family could have been homeless.

In January 2012, I was recovering from surgery when I received eviction papers from my landlord claiming I owed rent. Because I was on bed-rest, I could not go to court to respond to the eviction papers and Judgment by Default entered against me. When I was able to go to court a few days later, I filed a Motion to Open the Judgment.

House Bill 6661 requires that a tenant can only have their Motion to Open heard by the Judge if they deposit their rent into the court. In my case, the Housing Authority claimed my rent was $799 per month. This means I would have been required to pay $799 to the court in order for the court to even consider my Motion to Open. The problem with this is that my rent was not supposed to be $799. My income at the time was very low and there was no way I could've paid this to get my day in court. The Housing Authority had not adjusted my rent like they were supposed to, even though I had been giving them my pay stubs and other information for months.

Because I was able to file the Motion to Open in court, the Housing Authority was forced to investigate my case. It took over a year to straighten everything out but in the end the Housing Authority admitted their mistakes and reduced my rent from $799 to $288 for the month when I filed my Motion to Open. They went from claiming I owed them over $13,000 to admitting it was really only about $2300. All through the court process I had been making monthly payments, and once they made this adjustment I paid the arrearage in full and my case was withdrawn from court.

Please vote against House Bill 6661. It is unfair to tenants and does not take into account all the times when the tenant does not owe what the landlord says she owes. It also would have prevented me from having my case heard in court and would have been a disaster for me and my family.

Thank you.

Shenida Taylor
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April 1, 2013