

## **Housing Committee Public Hearing, March 4, 2014**

Thank you the members of the Housing Committee for this opportunity to testify in support of Bill No. 5436 – An Act Establishing a Pilot Program to Provide Medical Respite for the Homeless. My name is Tracey Williams. I'm currently an undergraduate student in the Social Work program at Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven, CT.

Living in an urban city (Bridgeport, CT) seeing homeless people is not rare to me. There have been many times when I've seen sick and visibly injured or hurt homeless people on the streets. I've often wondered why they weren't in the hospital or why haven't a shelter taken them in to help the recovering process to those who are willing to accept help. I'm glad to hear that a possible pilot program is in development to provide temporary shelter and assistance to homeless people to try and get them back to health due to illness or injury. I personally believe that it's unhealthy to see homeless people living on the streets whether they're sick or healthy unless it was a personal choice made by an individual. However, seeing sick and injured homeless people is worst. I'm always thinking about innocent children possibly discovering the body of a sick homeless person who couldn't recover back to health because there was nowhere to go. A hospital is not going to keep a sick homeless person for forever. They're treated just like how everyone else is treated. The difference is that if I end up in the hospital, after being treated I will have a home to recover and a permanent address and number to be reach for further assistance or check-in on my progress. According to National Health Care for the Homeless Council, compare to housed people homeless people are three to six times more likely to become ill. Homeless people lack good nutrition, access to basic medicine, pills, or first aid kit that could possibly improve their condition and they lack good access to products that helps keep their bodies clean. These factors are possible reasons why homeless people get ill so easily. Those who oppose this bill need to consider the factor that homeless people whose injuries and sickness that aren't taken care of properly will only end up in the hospital again and again if they don't have anywhere to go after being looked or treated on. This can be solved by providing them with a safe environment to recover.

Medical respite for the homeless is a serious problem. I urge you to vote in factor of this Bill No. 5436.

Thank You,

Tracey Williams