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**Testimony before the Housing Committee**  
**In Support of SB 363, An Act Transferring Funds Deposited in the Community Investment**  
**Account to the Department of Housing. March 3, 2014**

Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Butler and members of the Housing Committee,

My name is Representative Patricia Billie Miller and I represent the 145th Assembly District in Stamford.

I am here to testify in support of SB 363, An Act Transferring Funds Deposited in the Community Investment Account to the Department of Housing. I specifically support the investment in technical assistance in resident-led public housing communities.

Thankfully, the State of Connecticut has recognized the value of investing in public housing revitalization with Governor Malloy committing \$300 million over 10 years for this purpose. More than 30,000 residents of our state live in public housing. Thousands of units are unusable because of disrepair, and others are long overdue for physical updates and revitalization.

What this bill does is commit to human capital. It recognizes that residents in these communities are impacted by these investments, and that they have rights as their homes and communities are slated to be renovated, reconfigured, and in some cases, demolished.

Resident-led organizations, such as The Publicly Assisted Housing Resident Network, provide technical assistance and materials to help residents understand the scope and extent of proposed projects in their public housing communities. This work has traditionally assisted residents in establishing productive dialogue with housing authorities and the surrounding communities to be sure that the tenant's voice is considered in the context of major decisions that would impact their communities.

Tenants in public housing pay rent, just like tenants everywhere else. Many rental communities have tenant associations; condominiums have condo associations, etc. These organizations are a mechanism to ensure that the rights and concerns of tenants are considered.

Investing in technical assistance for residents in public housing is a wise choice. As we look at other major revitalization projects, community involvement is considered a best practice. Public housing communities can be beautiful and the vision and implementation of proposed improvements can only get better, if and when residents are involved from the start. Thank you for allowing me opportunity to testify on this bill.