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*With 21 volunteer  
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Testimony of  
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Connecticut's Legislative Commission on Aging

### Housing Committee

February 17, 2015

Senators Winfield and Osten, Representatives Butler and Rose, and esteemed members of the Housing Committee, we thank you for this opportunity to comment on two bills before you today.

As you know, Connecticut's Legislative Commission on Aging is the non-partisan, public policy and research office of the General Assembly, devoted to preparing Connecticut for a significantly changed demographic and enhancing the lives of the present and future generations of older adults. For over twenty years, the Legislative Commission on Aging has served as an effective leader in statewide efforts to promote choice, independence and dignity for Connecticut's older adults and persons with disabilities.

#### **Raised Bill No. 888: An Act Concerning Adequate and Safe Housing for the Elderly and Younger Persons with Disabilities**

Connecticut is undergoing a permanent and historic transformation in its demographics: it is aging. Connecticut is the 7<sup>th</sup> oldest state in the nation with the 3<sup>rd</sup> longest-lived constituency, and between 2010 and 2040, Connecticut's population of people age 65 and older is expected to grow by 57%. In light of these demographic changes, ensuring that there is adequate supply of affordable, accessible, high-quality housing for older adults is more important than ever before.

As you know, for decades, older adults and younger persons with disabilities have both resided together in publicly financed housing projects. Through our work, we are aware of the robust discussion of both the potential opportunities and problems that can arise from the co-existence of these two tenant groups. For some older adults, the experience of living in close quarters with younger tenants enhances intergenerational connectivity, social supports and quality of life. For others, it can result in lifestyle clashes and fears...<sup>1</sup>

All people deserve to live in an environment where they feel safe and can retain choice, independence and dignity. Accordingly, we appreciate the



challenges that some people may experience in what is offered referred to as a “mixed population” setting, and we embrace thoughtful opportunities to expand housing options for older adults in Connecticut. It is equally important that policy strategies foster notions of shared fate, across age and other demographic characteristics, especially as the need for affordable housing continues to rise for the population as a whole.

To better understand these issues and to ensure adequate and safe housing for older adults and younger persons with disabilities, Connecticut’s Legislative Commission on Aging **supports** a study of public housing in the state. Such a study should build on the research conducted by the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee in 2004.<sup>2</sup>

### **Proposed Bill Number 6461**

The need for affordable housing in Connecticut continues to surpass the available supply. Specifically, in Connecticut, 35% of home owners and 50% of renters spent at least 30% of their household income on housing. For Connecticut residents age 65 years and older, these numbers rise slightly to 40% of home owners and 53% of renters.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, Connecticut’s Legislative Commission on Aging **supports** any effort to improve data collection and analysis of affordable housing.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide comment today on these bills.

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<sup>1</sup> Conn. Gen. Stat. § 8-114d

<sup>2</sup> Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee. *Mixing Populations in State Elderly/Disabled Housing Projects*. 2004. Available at <[http://cga.cga.ct.gov/2004/pridata/Studies/pdf/Housing\\_Populations\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](http://cga.cga.ct.gov/2004/pridata/Studies/pdf/Housing_Populations_Final_Report.pdf)>

<sup>3</sup> US Census, 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.