

**Testimony of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Connecticut  
Before the Planning and Development Committee  
March 6, 2015**

**CONCERNS REGARDING  
Proposed SB 203 AN ACT CONCERNING COMMUNITY RESIDENCES**

Good morning Senator Osten, Representative Miller and members of the Planning and Development Committee, my name is Daniela Giordano and I am the Public Policy Director for the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Connecticut. NAMI Connecticut is the state affiliate of NAMI, the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for all those affected by mental health conditions. NAMI Connecticut offers support groups, educational programs, and advocacy for improved services, more humane treatment and an end to stigma and economic and social discrimination. We represent individuals who live with mental health conditions and parents and family members of individuals living with mental health conditions. I am writing to you today on behalf of NAMI Connecticut to share our concern regarding proposed bill *SB 203 An Act Concerning Community Residences*.

We are not sure what this bill is trying to accomplish as this matters seems to be already defined and settled in current law. The bill proposes "[t]hat section 8-3e of the general statutes be amended to require that the community residences governed therein be required to comply with all local zoning and land use regulations and ordinances." Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services' (DMHAS) operated and funded community residences that fall under this section are Department of Public Health (DPH) licensed residences that are home to six or fewer individuals. As such it is already stated that "(a) No zoning regulation shall treat the following [i.e., community residences] in a manner different from any single family residence." As we understand it, that also means that local zoning and land use regulations and ordinances that apply to single family residences equally apply to such community residences.

It is also worth noting that individuals who reside in these community residences are indeed residents of these towns and enjoy the same rights and responsibilities as all other residents.

Thank you for your time and attention. Please let me know if I can answer any questions for you.

Respectfully submitted,  
Daniela Giordano, MSW  
*Public Policy Director*  
NAMI Connecticut