



City of Milford, Connecticut

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Testimony in support of *Proposed Senate Bill No. 18—AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO STUDY HOARDING*

Submitted by: Deepa D. Joseph, MPH
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Senator Larson, Representative Dargan and Members of the Public Safety and Security Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on behalf of Proposed Bill No. 18.

I am very appreciative that the committee has undertaken such an important topic. The creation of a legislative task force to address the issue of hoarding aligns with national studies encouraging a multidisciplinary approach to addressing the public health issue of hoarding.

Over the past ten years, Milford has convened a local task force known as the Collaborative for Residential Integrity of the Disabled and Elderly (C-RIDE) to focus on the issues of troubled housing and, specifically, hoarding within our community. The primary purpose of CRIDE is to discuss cases of troubled housing and hoarding in Milford and suggest possible solutions. Frequently, those living in or responsible for the properties are known to one or more agencies and departments. Knowing individual circumstances is crucial to developing workable solutions.

As hoarding cases are usually complex and require significant resources, CRIDE has served as a platform to utilize a comprehensive case management model, minimize duplication of services, and avoid exhausting the limited resources we have to address these cases. Implementation of an interagency response to hoarding via CRIDE has resulted in positive outcomes for the individual, the property, the neighborhood, and the community-at-large. As identified by the efforts and membership of the statewide hoarding working group, Milford is unique in utilizing this strategy as this valuable strategy has not been implemented in many communities across the state.

An integrated approach to hoarding cannot happen without the appropriate players working together. Establishing a statewide task force to study hoarding is an excellent first step at duplicating and enhancing best practices that have been implemented on the local level, such as CRIDE, in order to develop systemic solutions to this public health concern. Such a task force will enable us to move from looking at individual stakeholders to looking at the possibilities available through cooperation and integration. All the agency stakeholders have limited resources. Successful interventions require these competing interests to work together. A statewide task force to study hoarding will assist with providing a framework for communities across the state to gain interagency cooperation through practical short-term and strategic long-term approaches to hoarding.

I look forward to sharing Milford's successes and challenges as it relates to our own local task force's approach to hoarding. I fully support the proposed bill and applaud the committee for taking on this task as we work together to protect the health and safety of our citizens.