

**Dr. Louisa Foss-Kelly**  
**Testimony before the Public Safety and Security Committee**  
**February 19, 2015**

**S.B. 18 Testimony**

Senator Larson, Representative Dargan, and esteemed members of the Public Safety and Security Committee:

My name is Dr. Louisa Foss-Kelly and I am a Connecticut Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) and Counselor Educator at Southern Connecticut State University.

Licensed Professional Counselors (LPCs) in Connecticut provide a range of mental health counseling services to children, adolescents, adults, and families. They practice as clinicians in outpatient, inpatient, and other mental health settings, treating those with anxiety, depression, and other behavioral health disorders including hoarding. As a licensed mental health professional of 15 years and Associate Professor of counselor education, I would like to provide my perspective on S.B. 18 *An Act Establishing a Task Force to Study Hoarding*.

I offer my strong support for S.B. 18 for the following reasons.

- Hoarding does not simply cause risk of harm. It is a source of intense emotional suffering for those who hoard and the individuals and groups in their lives. Severe hoarding can thus have a radiating impact on the families and communities of those who demonstrate hoarding behaviors.
- Hoarding is increasingly recognized by the mental health community as a significant and serious problem. In 2013, the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental and Emotional Disorders* added *Hoarding Disorder* to its comprehensive list of disorders. The recognition of *Hoarding Disorder* as an independent diagnosis has had an immediate impact on clinical work and has served as a clear call for increasing resources and attention.
- At its core, hoarding is a complex psychological disorder. **Therefore interventions involving physical removal of possessions may only temporarily solve the problem.** To have lasting impact on decreasing hoarding behavior, professional counseling and other forms of psychiatric treatment are critical.

In sum, **the complexity of this issue demands additional attention and investigation to better serve the citizens of our state.** Therefore I urge members of the committee to consider the importance of appointing a task force to study hoarding in Connecticut. Attention to this problem and additional resources will undoubtedly result in

advancements in effective community response to hoarding and a more holistic, community-based approach to the treatment of hoarding.

Respectfully,

*Louisa Foss-Kelly, PhD, LPC*

Louisa Foss-Kelly, PhD, LPC  
Associate Professor of Counseling and School Psychology  
Southern Connecticut State University