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STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING



Evonne M. Klein  
Commissioner

**TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON AGING 3/3/2015**

Evonne Klein, Commissioner  
Department of Housing

*Senate Bill No. 1004: An Act Concerning Senior Housing*

Good morning Senator Flexer, Representative Serra, and distinguished members of the Aging Committee. My name is Evonne Klein and I am the Commissioner of the Department of Housing (DOH). Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you regarding Senate Bill 1004, which impacts DOH and the Connecticut residents and communities, we serve.

This proposal requires DOH, in consultation with the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA), to conduct a study concerning state-assisted housing for elderly tenants. This bill has similar language to Senate Bill No. 888, An Act Concerning Adequate and Safe Housing for the Elderly and Younger Persons with Disabilities, which I offered testimony on during the February 17<sup>th</sup> public hearing before the Housing committee. As drafted, this bill will carry a fiscal note and the Department is unable to offer its support.

However, if the bill were to move forward, we would like to respectfully request changes to the currently drafted language. As Commissioner Rehmer and I previously testified in the Housing Committee, we met to discuss a feasible plan that ensures the needs of both the state's elderly and young disabled populations are addressed. We believe that any proposed study on this issue should include other agencies and organizations to ensure we have representatives that serve the broad range of disability groups living in elderly/disabled housing, such as the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, the Department on Aging, the Department of Developmental Services, the Office for Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities, and representation from the Independent Living Centers.

DOH also respectfully requests that the reporting deadline be extended to December 31, 2016 to allow adequate time for the Department to compile this information in a clear and concise manner. While we are sensitive to the nature of reporting deadlines and the importance of taking action quickly, we believe it is a far better approach to allow for enough time to gather the data needed to present high quality information to the legislature. It would not be practical, nor is it beneficial to the people of Connecticut, to rush through a study of this scope and complexity.

As it currently stands, the Department, along with its partners, will have to rely on existing staff to manage the large task of convening the working group, gathering the necessary data, analyzing the data, reaching a consensus among the group, and drafting the report. Obviously this is a complex issue and there are several impediments to gathering the data, such as the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), which constrain the working group's ability to obtain information on the specific disabilities of current residents and those on waiting lists. Our agencies will need ample time to ensure this is a thorough and effective study. For these reasons, without an extended deadline and with the addition of a fiscal note, the Department cannot support this bill.

Thank you for your time and I would be happy to answer any questions.