

Testimony of Daisy Franklin, Vice President, Publicly-assisted
Housing Resident Network, submitted for the March 2, 2015, public
hearing before the Appropriations Committee

My name is Daisy Franklin. I live at 82 South Main Street, Norwalk, Connecticut. Thank you to the Co-Chairs and members of the Appropriations Committee for providing time for the public to address you concerning issues in the Governor's proposed budget.

I am a member of the Board of Directors of the Connecticut Publicly-assisted Housing Resident Network (PHRN), a board member of the Connecticut Housing Coalition (CHC), and a member of the board of the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC). I also served as a resident member of the Inter-Agency Council on Affordable Housing. All of these organizations work to improve, preserve, and increase the amount of affordable housing available to low and extremely low income residents of our state.

I want you to know that Governor Malloy was nominated and won a national award last fall from the National Low Income Housing Coalition. He was recognized as a national leader for his commitment to improving, preserving, and increasing affordable housing in the state. We were very proud of our Governor for his work and the national recognition he has received. In fact, I nominated him for the national award. PHRN and the Connecticut Housing Coalition supported my nomination. I introduced him and presented him with the award at the recognition affair in Washington.

You can imagine my surprise when I discovered that the Governor had zeroed out all PILOT and Tax Abatement funds in his proposed state budget for the next two fiscal years! These funds have provided municipalities where state public housing communities and affordable housing tax abatement communities are located to receive some tax payments from the state. The partial tax payments assist these municipalities to balance their budgets. Without these funds in the state budget, residents of the properties will have to pay the PILOT and Tax Abatement amounts themselves. Their rents will have to be raised – by quite a bit in most cases. Many will have to go without food and medication in order to pay the increased rent amounts each month. There will be approximately 10,000 families in the state that will be affected with rent increases if the PILOT and Tax Abatement grant funds are not restored to the state budget.

Finally, our organization, the Publicly-assisted Housing Resident Network (PHRN), was instrumental in helping to pass two resident-oriented pieces of legislation in 2011. The first allows public housing residents to elect the tenant commissioner who represents them on their housing authority board of commissioners. The second guarantees that residents must have many opportunities to participate in the revitalization of their communities. We at PHRN were very proud that the Governor signed these two pieces of legislation into law. We were also proud that a PHRN resident leader was front and center with the Governor at the press conference where he announced his \$300 million 10-year revitalization of the state's public housing system. Therefore, we were surprised and very disappointed when we discovered that the Governor's proposed budget zeroes out DOH funding to our organization, PHRN. We are the only statewide resident organization in the country. We are educating and training residents about their new

rights in accordance with the new laws. Our peer-to-peer training meets residents where they are at and seeks to encourage them to participate in housing revitalization and other activities.

In conclusion, I want to encourage Appropriation Committee members to restore both the PILOT and Tax Abatement grant funds that the Governor's proposed budget eliminates. Please don't balance the budget on the backs of the poorest residents in the state. Also, we ask that you restore \$150,000 in DOH funding to PHRN so that we can continue our education and training activities with state public housing residents throughout the state. . .` .