

**Written Testimony in Support of STRIVE CT Program funding**

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**Submitted To:** Governor and State Legislators

***As a Councilwoman in the City of Hartford, I am submitting this written testimony in support of the restoration of the minimal amount of funding of STRIVE CT to the tune of at least \$270,000 per year.***

As you are aware, the City of Hartford is currently undergoing some of the most extensive investments of private funding in the history of this city. Since October of 2014, we have experienced a commitment of millions of dollars in private monies. We have recently received a commitment of \$350 million for the development of a baseball stadium, grocery store, brewery, housing and retail shops in the downtown north neighborhood, which represents a total renovation of an entire neighborhood adjacent to downtown Hartford. The development of Downtown North will create approximately **600 construction jobs, 80 Hooker Brewery jobs, 100 supermarket jobs and 300-400 total jobs** at project completion. We have a commitment from the developers and the participating unions, to provide **40% of these jobs to Hartford residents**. STRIVE

CT is a critical component to ensure that local people are job ready and placed in jobs as they open up in our city. This development of the Hartford and Connecticut workforce is critical to continuing to stabilize the Hartford economy and Connecticut's economy. Connecticut taxpayers will benefit tremendously if private developers can invest in our economy in Connecticut, and be assured that we have a workforce that is ready and able to support new businesses coming into Connecticut. A strong workforce is critical to attracting new businesses into Connecticut, and Connecticut taxpayers all benefit tremendously from the additional tax revenues from every single business that locates in Hartford, or anywhere else in the state of Connecticut.

In addition, since the unprecedented private investment in the Downtown North Development, Hartford Hospital has committed to investing \$150 million to develop their new Joint Center in the city. Once again, we have hundreds of jobs in construction, maintenance, health care, administration and other areas where we will be able to positively impact the Connecticut economy with a workforce that is properly prepared and job ready.

Every new employee that works in Hartford Hospital, or in any other new development project, pays income taxes to the State of Connecticut, business taxes to the city and the state, and many will become homeowners in Hartford, and will pay property taxes to the city and the state. Every new employee will purchase goods and services for their businesses and families and they will pay Connecticut sales taxes with their increased incomes. New employees in our state will purchase new automobiles for their families, and they will pay taxes on these cars to the City of Hartford, gas taxes to the State of Connecticut, and numerous other taxes, fees and permits as a result of new

business development. When businesses are attracted to the City of Hartford and the State of Connecticut because of a strong workforce, new businesses and new residents are also attracted to move to Connecticut.

Census numbers for 2000 and 2010, reflected a loss of residents to the State of Connecticut. This loss of residents reflected a loss of a congressional seat, resulting in the loss of billions of dollars federal funding. A loss of Connecticut residents also results in a loss in sales tax revenues; State Income Tax revenues; gas tax revenues; property tax revenues, and loss of disposable income that can be spent at local business establishments throughout Connecticut. Every resident that leaves Connecticut results in a tremendous annual loss to the local and Connecticut economy and the Connecticut tax base. An attractive economy with new business opportunities, job openings and opportunities for business development, will mean an opportunity for Connecticut to regain residents who left Connecticut for better economic opportunities. STRIVE CT is an important element in the development of our local workforce, and consequently, our local and state economy.

We have received a commitment by the State of Connecticut to reimburse our city an additional \$65 million to build a fully renovated Weaver High School, and we have received a commitment from a private engineering firm to build a \$70 million building in downtown Hartford. Through the City of Hartford Community Benefits Program under the current City Council, we have brokered internships and jobs for Hartford residents. As a result of the development of this engineering firm, Hartford will attract upwardly mobile students graduating with engineering degrees. As a result of these engineering employment opportunities in Hartford. STRIVE CT will be a critical

component to prepare Hartford residents and Connecticut residents for the jobs available in this and many other Hartford based businesses that are expanding their workforce, renovating their properties and creating new business opportunities to put Hartford residents and Connecticut residents to work. Hartford has numerous schools that will also receive state reimbursement for their renovation, to include Martin Luther King Middle school and others. This school construction alone will probably total close to an additional \$100 million for the upcoming year, and will create additional construction jobs, maintenance jobs, teacher positions, paraprofessional opportunities and administrative opportunities as well. In addition, Hartford currently has construction taking place in downtown Hartford, in the millions of dollars for the renovation and building of facilities to house UCONN; private condominium development is currently taking place, and the proposed renovation of Westbrook Village public housing development and Bowles Park public housing development are under consideration for development, all of which will mean millions of dollars in federal development, state and local development monies. Hartford has enough jobs to carry our city through the next twenty years. STRIVE CT is critical to the development of a viable city and viable state economy.

In order to stabilize our economy and keep our taxes low, we need to expand small businesses, and put Hartford residents and Connecticut residents to work. We can do this by developing a strong, well trained workforce in Hartford, and making sure that our residents have full employment so they can pay their taxes, buy homes, and support their families. We must encourage larger businesses to work with Hartford small businesses, and we must encourage *all* Hartford businesses to hire Hartford

residents. The expansion of Connecticut businesses and the Connecticut economy through the development of a strong local and statewide workforce, that creates an environment where businesses move into our state, is a mandate of State government. We are asking that the Connecticut legislature and the Governor retain STRIVE CT in the Governor's budget. Maintaining STRIVE is good for the Hartford economy, it is good for the Connecticut economy, and it helps to strengthen and protect the investment of Connecticut taxpayers.

As a result of all of the items discussed above, I would like to request that STRIVE CT remains in the Governor's budget at the funding level of \$270,000 for this budget year. Thank you.