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& ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

**Testimony of State Representative Patricia Billie Miller**  
**To the Government Administration & Elections Committee, in support of: House Bill 6694,**  
***An Act Concerning Freedom of Association in Public Housing***

**Public Hearing February 25, 2015**

Good afternoon, Chairman Cassano and Chairman Jutila and distinguished members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee. I am submitting this testimony in support of House Bill 6694, An Act Concerning Freedom of Association in Public Housing.

The need for this bill came to my attention, because there are a number of public housing agencies that do not allow political activities in common areas. These authorities prohibit the use of community rooms to be made available for campaign events or door-to-door canvassing by political candidates denying residents the right to engage in political activities.

According to the Connecticut Department of Housing and Department of Housing and Urban Development, housing authorities may set their own rules concerning tenants' use of common areas. However, these rules must comply with constitutional limits imposed by the First Amendment's freedom of expression provision. Housing authorities prohibiting tenants from using common areas for political activities may be infringing on their First Amendment rights.

The enactment of this legislation will help to ensure that no resident of public housing will be denied their fundamental right of freedom of expression, the foundation of our democracy.

Thank you again for allowing me to submit this testimony and for your consideration of this bill.