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Senator Gary Winfield
Representative Larry Butler,
Housing Committee
Room 2700, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Senator Winfield, Representative Butler, Senator Hwang, Representative Kupchick and members of the Housing Committee:

I am in front of you today testifying in support of three bills; SB 404 AN ACT CONCERNING THE MAINTENANCE OF A WAIT LIST FOR PUBLIC HOUSING, SB 405 AN ACT CONCERNING THE RETENTION OF SECURITY DEPOSITS FOR AGE-RESTRICTED PUBLIC HOUSING and SB 409 AN ACT EXPANDING AGE-RESTRICTED HOUSING OPTIONS FOR ELDERLY PERSONS. I would like to thank you for raising these bills for public hearing and taking an interest in our growing elderly population.

As we all know, we are living longer. This has produced a huge housing need for seniors. It is projected that by 2030 there will be almost 88 million people age 60 or older in the United States. To meet this growing need, builders are increasing the percentage of homes they build for the age-restricted markets. Age-restricted communities appeal to older buyers because of the style of the home and the amenities and conveniences provided. My hometown of Enfield has become a model community for senior housing. We want our seniors to stay here during their retired years. We want them to live out their lives in housing that is safe and accessible. These three proposals which have bipartisan support would benefit and enhance age restricted housing throughout Connecticut.

SB 404 AN ACT CONCERNING THE MAINTENANCE OF A WAIT LIST FOR PUBLIC HOUSING

This legislation would allow the housing authority of any municipality to maintain a wait list for public housing based on the date and time the housing application was received. The goal would

be to streamline the application process for public housing. The process applying for should be organized, logical and fair. The current system is outdated. The method proposed in SB 404 is currently used for federal housing waiting lists and supports Governor Malloy's reinvestment imitative for State Sponsored Housing.

SB 405 AN ACT CONCERNING THE RETENTION OF SECURITY DEPOSITS FOR AGE-RESTRICTED PUBLIC HOUSING
A quick note about the drafting of SB 405, my intent in requesting this bill was to change the statute allowing those in age restricted housing to retain their security deposit after one year. The proposal should allow public housing authorities to keep the security deposit for the length of the lease, as is normal practice in most rental situations. Most residents of this type of housing remain as a tenant long after a year and when they do terminate their lease there is no funding source to address damages or updating of the vacated unit.

SB 409 AN ACT EXPANDING AGE-RESTRICTED HOUSING OPTIONS FOR ELDERLY PERSONS This bill would expand age-restricted housing options for elderly residents in our state. I think we can all agree that with our aging population, we need to look for more ways to afford greater flexibility to senior citizens in housing options. Thousands of the state's aging residents rely on elderly housing as costs go up, and their income stays the same. However, a growing number of apartments built for the elderly are being filled by people under the age of 62. The Program Review and Investigation Committee, a panel which I have been proud to serve as co-chair, was asked by the General Assembly to look into the matter of elderly housing 10 years ago. At the time, they found 17 percent of elderly housing units to be occupied by non-elderly. A recent report by WFSB noted that state housing officials say that statistic grew to 24 percent by 2013. In the past, I have proposed that 86 percent of elderly housing be reserved for those over the age of 60. It is part of an effort to strike the right balance and address the needs of folks who are in their senior years. A similar proposal was passed in Massachusetts.

I would also add that the problem isn't just the scarcity of elderly housing, but the mixing of elderly populations with younger populations. As my elderly constituents and their families have informed me, the younger residents in these housing units naturally like to have their younger friends come over, sometimes have parties, driving on motorcycles, and that's not what the seniors anticipated when they moved into those facilities. The seniors I represent in north-central Connecticut have similar stories as the seniors you all represent. They are people who worked all their lives, supported their family, gave back to their communities and now wish to live out their golden years here in a safe, affordable setting.

Thank you for your time today. It is my hope that the Housing Committee sees the benefits of these proposals and feels confident to move them forward to a full vote in the House and Senate.