



Connecticut Chapter  
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*February 17, 2015, Committee on Veterans' Affairs*

*Written Testimony submitted by*

*John Rumberger, Vice President of Housing and Legislation*

*On behalf of the membership of Conn-NAHRO*

*Conn-NAHRO is the Connecticut chapter of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials; its membership is comprised of Public Housing Authorities and other individuals and organizations involved in affordable housing.*

Co-Chairpersons Senator Flexer and Representative Hennessy and members of the Committee on Veteran's Affairs

My name is John Rumberger; I am the Vice President of Housing and Legislation for Conn-NAHRO and also the Facilities Manager of the Middletown Housing Authority. We at CONN-NAHRO appreciate the continuing efforts to support our veterans, however, **we are writing in opposition of H.B 6378 (RAISED) AN ACT PROVIDING VETERANS' PREFERENCES IN THE RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND HOUSING AUTHORITY PROJECTS**

We understand the motivation behind a preference for individuals who have served our country with honor and distinction. However, the need for veterans to have affordable housing is not one that is simply addressed with a preference. We believe that the legislation in place protects the ability of veterans and all of our citizens to be housed. Connecticut's Discriminatory Housing Practices Act prohibits discrimination in housing because of:

- Race or color
- National origin
- Ancestry
- Creed (Religion)
- Sex
- Marital Status
- Age (non-minors)
- Familial status (families with children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal custodians and pregnant women)
- Disability (physical, mental or learning)
- Lawful source of income (income derived from social security, SSI, housing

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- assistance such as Section 8, child support, alimony, public or general assistance)
- Sexual orientation
- Gender Identity or Expression

We ask that the committee consider making the veteran's preference more unfettered rather than mandatory in the statute and allow each housing authority to adopt the preference on a program by program basis. Each housing authority board understands the purpose of this preference and for every other group seeking them. Our mission is to provide "safe, decent and affordable housing" for all of our eligible citizens including veterans.

Thank you for taking the time to read this testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

John Rumberger