



Senator Bye, Senator Kane, Representative Walker, Representative Ziobron, and Members of the Committee, thank you for hearing my testimony today on the important investments through the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to support efforts to end homelessness in CT.

My name is Lakeisha Kinsey and I am employed in a Supervisory position at Safe Futures. Safe Futures serves approximately 5,000 victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in Southeastern Connecticut annually. Our services include a 24/hr hotline, an emergency shelter, counseling and advocacy offices, a transitional living program, supportive housing services; court based family violence victim advocates in two courts, an advocate in a local police department and educators in local school systems.

We are making great amazing progress towards our goal of ending homelessness in CT with the support of Governor Malloy, the Legislature, the Dept of Housing and the Dept of Mental Health and Addiction.

CT is the first state in the nation recognized by the federal government for ending chronic homelessness among our

Veterans in 2014. CT is also on track with the Campaign to end chronic homelessness of people with severe disabilities by the end of this year.

Working with our partners in the Reaching Home Campaign and at the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness, we have worked hard to develop comprehensive data regarding what we need to end chronic homelessness. **We ask for your support for the additional 150 units of permanent supportive housing required this year to make our goal.**

We support the Reaching Home Campaigns proposal for **\$1.5 million for rental subsidies and \$1.125 million for services in FY 17 to reach the goal of ending chronic homelessness in Connecticut.**

We know what works to end chronic homelessness: permanent supportive housing, which combines housing subsidy with case management services. Permanent supportive housing is highly effective at ending once and for all the homelessness of those who need this assistance. And it is proven to save communities up to 70% of the costs they will otherwise incur when chronic homelessness persists

Homelessness is an unacceptable condition for any Connecticut resident, and an expensive public policy

problem. Investments in permanent supportive housing save public resources, and help those most need transition to housing, stability, and hope.

After working with survivors of domestic violence who've escaped the abuse they've endured from their abuser, and now safely housed in PSH is an absolute blessing. There is one particular story I would like to share with you. This story is of a single mother who endeared a significant amount of domestic violence from her daughter's father coupled with her mental health she was at her breaking point. This client wanted to give up she had no family or friends to support her, she had lost everything she's ever worked for. Not only was this abuser physical but emotional, financial and controlling too. This client came to us in near death, fleeing with just the clothes she had on her back and infant in tow. After being approved for supportive housing services this client is absolutely flourishing in the community. This client continues with her wraparound supports and usage of the housing first model, she has maintained her housing, working a part-time retail job along with receiving her social security benefits. To see this young woman who once had absolutely nothing, now successful housed in PSH, obtained her driver's license and school for nursing is a shining brighter than star.

Thank you for hearing my testimony and thank you for your support to efforts to end homelessness in Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Lakeisha Kinsey

Supervisor of Transitional Living and Supportive Housing

SAFE FUTURES