Senator Osten, Senator Formica, Representative Walker, Representative Lavielle, and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for hearing my testimony today on the important investments through the Department of Housing to support efforts to end homelessness in Connecticut.

My name is Liz Halla-Mattingly, and I am a graduate student at the UConn School of Social Work and an intern at Chrysalis Center in Hartford. Chrysalis Center provides supportive services to assist people in need to transform their lives. We serve those living in poverty, Veterans, women and children, young adults, and individuals struggling with mental health, addiction, HIV/AIDS, homelessness, and those returning from incarceration.

Chrysalis Center is currently providing services to the individuals living in over 600 Supportive Housing units across the state of Connecticut. Our Community Supportive Housing programs follow the Housing First model, which has been shown to significantly reduce the number of individuals considered chronically homeless. By using Housing First, our clients can live independently in housing that is safe, stable, and affordable. Only once housing is in place do clients have the ability to address substance abuse, mental health, or other challenges they may have, and were unable to work on while homeless. Additionally, Chrysalis Center provides wraparound services which is vitally important for clients. When people have a system of support and become members of a community, housing becomes sustainable – thus preventing future homelessness. The benefits of these programs create a ripple effect: when Chrysalis Center and other private non-profits provide supportive housing, the state of Connecticut saves money. When this population is housed, they are less likely to use the Emergency Room, require hospitalization, or end up incarcerated.

Chrysalis Center recognizes the great strides that Connecticut has made to end homelessness in the state. It is critical that we are able to continue to provide services that really work. Therefore, we are asking the Committee to continue to support the budget line item for housing. Thank you for your time.

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