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## State of Connecticut

### SENATE

Good morning Senator Marx, Representative Felipe, and members of the Housing Committee. I submit this testimony in strong support for SB 12: AN ACT CONCERNING CONNECTICUT'S HOUSING NEEDS. This bill aims to improve the housing conditions of all Connecticut residents by addressing the housing crisis facing our state.

Connecticut had the fewest available housing units per household of any U.S. state in 2023. ECO Northwest found this year that our state is roughly 135,000 units short of meeting the affordable housing needs of all of our residents. Half of our state's renters spend over 30% of their monthly income on housing costs, making their housing circumstances unsustainable in the long-term. It is time for us as a state to acknowledge housing as a human right and act accordingly. Every day that we fail to progress toward housing for all, we choose to subject our most vulnerable residents to another day of uncertainty and, in some cases, another day without shelter. Through taking meaningful steps to address and correct this unjust reality, we can move closer to granting every person in Connecticut the dignity they deserve – the dignity of having somewhere to call “home”.

Beyond our moral duty to house our state's residents, the economic benefits of ending homelessness outweigh the costs. A 2016 study by the National Coalition to End Homelessness estimated that we would save \$4,800 a year for every homeless person we permanently shelter. The net annual economic benefit of housing the roughly 5,000 homeless people in our state would exceed \$31 million, when adjusting for inflation. Today, the strain that homelessness creates on our economy, support systems, and social safety nets costs us roughly \$47,000 per homeless person annually, or \$235 million in total. Ending homelessness is not only a just pursuit; it is fiscally prudent.

Accomplishing this mission requires action on all fronts. We must make housing construction more affordable and desirable to developers to develop more housing for people at all income levels, while intentionally increasing investments in constructing affordable units. We must remove barriers to entry that make many rental options inaccessible to lower-income residents. We must protect tenants' housing stability by ensuring they can stay in their home for a year as long as they are in good standing. We must explore more creative possibilities of what affordable housing can look like and where we can build it. We must create an environment that makes smaller landlords more competitive in the market and limits the ability of large corporations to dominate housing markets and price-gouge renters. Finally, we must see meaningful action from every corner and community in the state. It is time for us to unite and make Housing for All a reality.

It is morally and economically unconscionable that we continue to allow this crisis to fester. We need to take comprehensive steps to ensure that everyone in our state has a place to live. Our streets will be safer, our local economies will flourish, and our support networks will be able to more effectively meet the needs of our communities. With a price tag of over \$250 million per year, we cannot afford to not fully address Connecticut's housing crisis.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'B' followed by a cursive name.