

Legislative History for Connecticut Act

PA 14-46

SB364

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announcements or introductions? If not, Mr. Clerk, let's
return to the Calendar

Will you please call Calendar Number 328.

THE CLERK:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, on page 13, Calendar Number 328,
favorable report of the joint Senate committee on Human
Services. Senate Bill 364, AN ACT CONCERNING THE
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REVISIONS TO
THE SUPPORTIVE HOUSING INITIATIVE STATUTE.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The distinguished chairman of the Housing Committee,
Representative Butler, you have the floor, sir.

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you look very
dressed up for this dress down day. I hope you at least
have an opportunity to lose the tie before the day is out.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

I'll try, sir.

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

I move for acceptance of the joint committee's
favorable report and passage of the bill in concurrence
with the Senate.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Question is on acceptance of the joint committee's

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favorable report and passage of the bill in concurrence with the Senate.

Will you -- will you remark, sir?

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

Yes, thank you. Mr. Speaker, this bill adds the Department of Developmental Services and The Department of Veteran Affairs to end fees which DMHAS must collaborate in the administration of the Permanent Supportive Housing Initiative.

The bill passed in the Housing Committee by 7-0 vote, also in Human Services by 17-0 vote. And the entire 36 members of the Senate passed the bill. I move adoption.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir.

Would you care to remark? Would you care to remark further on the bill before us?

Representative Bacchiochi.

REP. BACCHIOCHI (52nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, through you to the Chairman of the Housing Committee. In addition to Developmental Services and Veterans Affairs being added, are there any other changes? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Butler.

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REP. BUTLER (72nd):

Yes, through you, Mr. Speaker, there is. The only other provision is there is a four different criteria that was used for eligibility that is going to be removed. As a result of that, all individual and family homeless residents will be eligible as well as all at-risk individual and family -- will also be eligible. So it removes those four criteria, and in essence gives all of these various departments a chance to consider all of these folks.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Bacchiochi.

REP. BACCHIOCHI (52nd):

Thank you. It's obviously very important that we address our homeless population. Through you, Mr. Speaker, is it correct to say that homeless people in Connecticut right now do not qualify for supportive housing?

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Butler.

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

Well, they do qualify, but this criteria was kind of cumbersome. By removing the criteria, all of the homeless

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individuals would be considered. And what the collaboration with all the entities that will work with DMHAS, especially with the Veteran's Affairs, we know that veterans will be taken under consideration as well in this bill. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Bacchiochi.

REP. BACCHIOCHI (52nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And this is a good bill and an important bill. But I do think for the -- with the Chamber's understanding, I would like, if the good chairman can explain, what are the four criteria that are being removed so that we can more efficiently service our homeless population and, as you said, our veteran population. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Butler.

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

Yes. The four criteria. The first one is people or families affected by psychiatric disabilities. Chemical dependencies or both who are homeless or at risk. The second is families who qualify for temporary assistance for needy families. The third is 18 to 23-year-olds who are homeless or at risk of being homeless because they are

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transitioning out of foster care or other residential programs. And the fourth and final criteria is community supervised offenders with serious mental health needs who are under Judicial Branch or Department of Corrections jurisdiction. Through You, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Bacchiochi.

REP. BACCHIOCHI (52nd):

Thank you. And I do see and I thank the good chairman for that explanation. Lines 13-21, the removal of those four criteria. Through you, Mr. Speaker, am I correct that previously the agencies could only provide supportive housing to applicants who previously met one of those four criteria? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Butler.

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, that was my understanding as well.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Bacchiochi.

REP. BACCHIOCHI (52nd):

Thank you. So with the removal of the four criteria, which I understand is how previously the agencies would

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determine eligibility, what replaces that? What are the new eligibility requirements for an individual to seek the supportive housing? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Butler.

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, that's a very good question. Well, that's why we're adding the Department of Developmental Services and Veteran's Affairs do work with DMHAS. Also in the collaboration of coming up with the new eligibility criteria would be CHFA, the Judicial Branch, Court Support Services and DSS, Corrections, and Children and Families, as well as Housing.

They will come together and work on eligibility that will be put forward in RPs going forward. So they're going to collaborate on that. But all individuals and family homeless will be eligible. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Bacchiochi.

REP. BACCHIOCHI (52nd):

Thank you. And that's sort of where I'm still a little bit confused. That if we remove the four criteria that you previously stated and we are now opening it up,

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which I think is a great thing. We're going to include homeless people or people at risk of being homeless and veterans, will a new proposal be coming forward from the agencies stating what the new criteria is to allocate the supportive housing units? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Butler. ;

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, yes. Well, this is [inaudible] going forward because they're trying to anticipate the changing need of the homes population. And in any given RFP, the criteria may vary somewhat depending on the particular need that they anticipate or that they see that they need to address. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Bacchiochi.

REP. BACCHIOCHI (52nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is there a time frame by which we would expect to hear something from the state agencies involved? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Butler.

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I guess we will see that

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when the first RFPs go out, that information would be available. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Bacchiochi.

REP. BACCHIOCHI (52nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To which populations are the RFPs going to be sought from? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Butler.

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

It's -- I believe it's a competitive bid process for RPs. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Bacchiochi.

REP. BACCHIOCHI (52nd):

Thank you. And I'm sure it's because I'm not hearing the Chairman very well. So I apologize if I'm repeating a question. I didn't hear your answer clearly. I was hoping to determine for the Chamber, we have eliminated the initial criteria by which supportive housing units were allocated by several state agencies. I understand we're going to, perhaps, replace those criteria now with people who are homeless or at risk of being homeless. Am I understanding that correctly? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

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SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Butler.

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

Yes, through you, Mr. Speaker, yes. I can understand, it's a little hard to hear in here. Yes, what we're doing in essence is expanding the eligibility. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Bacchiochi.

REP. BACCHIOCHI (52nd):

Okay. So just to clarify we're not eliminating the four criteria, we're adding eligibility criteria in to include homeless individuals, people at risk of homelessness? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Butler.

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, that's correct.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Bacchiochi.

REP. BACCHIOCHI (52nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank you, for that clarification, because I wasn't sure exactly clear how that would work. I believe this is an excellent move

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forward as we look at our supportive housing program.

There are populations who have been underserved, such as homeless. Through you, Mr. Speaker, if the good chairman could share sort of a definition of at risk of homelessness. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Butler.

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I believe that probably people who are one step away from being homeless, and the various -- the various departments will look at the people who are applying, and I'm sure at that point they will give more clarity to that. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Bacchiochi.

REP. BACCHIOCHI (52nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do like the bill. I think we should have perhaps done a little better in the definition of at risk of homelessness. I'm sure that that's going to be a question that some of our state agencies put forward.

I'm also happy in the bill that we're adding veterans to the group of people who will now be able to be considered for supportive housing. Are we just stating

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veterans or is it homeless veterans or veterans suffering from certain disabilities or are we just adding veterans to the list? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Butler.

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, actually we're adding the Department of Veteran Affairs to the list of departments that are going to be collaborating on this. So by the very nature that they're going to be at the table, we're talking about assisting homeless veterans and making sure that their interests are at the table going forward.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Bacchiochi.

REP. BACCHIOCHI (52nd):

Thank you. Thank you for that answer. So we're not specifically adding veterans under the criteria, we're adding The Veteran's Department to the group or the group of agencies who will collaborate as we move forward on supportive housing. Through you, Mr. Speaker, could we review which agencies are now going to be tasked with the delivery of the supportive housing units? We've added two today. Could the good chairman review which agencies will

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be making these decisions.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Butler.

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, yes. As I indicated, the Department of Developmental Services and Veterans Affairs will be added to the list. And they will collaborate with The Department of Mental Health and Addictive Services and there's various other departments that will work on this initiative as well.

They are the CHFA, The Judicial Branch's Court Support Service Division, DDS, The Corrections Department, Children's and Family as well as the Department of Housing. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Bacchiochi.

REP. BACCHIOCHI (52nd):

Thank you. And will CHFA continue to be the lead agency collecting the RFPs? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Butler.

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, yes.

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Representative Bacchiochi.

REP. BACCHIOCHI (52nd):

Thank you. And I'm very encouraged by this bill. Those interested in line 34, we're really going to reach out to individuals, homeless individuals with psychiatric disabilities and substance abuse disorders. And I just think all of us understand that those populations in Connecticut are underserved. I think this is going to be a tremendous asset for agencies who are trying to deliver services to those populations. I want to compliment the Chairman for the work done on this bill, and I would urge my colleagues to support it. Thank you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, Madam.

Would you care to remark further on the bills before us?

Representative Noujaim.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, good afternoon, sir.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Good afternoon, sir.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to offer sincere congratulations to my colleague from the great City of

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Waterbury, Representative Butler, because somehow he always manages to bring to this body pieces of legislation that are supported unanimously by so many committees, including the Senate before they -- before they arrive to us. So how can you vote against something that's been supported unanimously?

Also something that was brought by one of my colleagues from my great city. So I truly appreciate that. But, through you, Mr. Speaker, I'd just like for legislative purposes, there are a couple of issues I would like to request an explanation for. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

I'm sorry, was there a question?

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Yes, Mr. Speaker, through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Butler.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you to Representative Butler, in line 11, I know that Representative Bacchiochi spoke about at risk and at homeless. How -- how do we ensure that those -- that those constituents that we are trying to serve are, in

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fact, homeless? Are there any specific -- specific details that we now must arrive at to ensure that they are really homeless, not just being out for a small, short period of time. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Butler.

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, there's a list of nine different state agencies that are going to be working on this. I'm sure that between all those agencies they're going to address to make sure that the -- the correct people are eligible to participate in the Supportive Housing Initiative. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Noujaim.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and through you, Mr. Speaker, I know that Representative Bacchiochi asked about the at risk, and Representative Butler answered it. I could not hear it very well. I would like to ask Representative Butler just to recap again the definition of at risk. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Butler.

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REP. BUTLER (72nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, it's people on the verge of becoming homeless, and while there's no set definition, it's the criteria that's been used previous to this bill and all these agencies will determine that going forward.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Noujaim.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I truly appreciate the answer. And through you, Mr. Speaker, I am reading up on the bill, and basically it says how to reprioritize individuals for supportive housing. How do we reprioritize to ensure that the appropriate people are receiving the services ahead of others? How do we define that? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Butler.

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, all these agencies are going to work on that and determine that. So it's going to be a collaboration of all these agencies that's going to determine that. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

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Representative Noujaim.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and through you, Mr. Speaker, if we go through a reprioritizing process, would we risk of leaving some people off or pushing them out of the way when they truly do need our help. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Butler.

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, could the kind gentleman please repeat your answer? Because I'm having a little difficulty hearing.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Noujaim, could you repeat your question?

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, allow me please. By the word reprioritizing, would we risk probably putting people ahead of others so some other folks who are really in need of our help, our constituents, would probably end up being pushed backwards and not receiving the services that they desire or that they deserve and we desire to serve them. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

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SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Butler.

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, no, I don't think we have a problem with that because by the very virtue of this bill what we're going to do is expand the eligibility. So I don't think that will be an issue. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Noujaim.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you. Thank you, Representative Butler, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and through you, just my final question. I read in the analysis that this piece of legislation, when adopted, is going to offer us some cost savings, and I am a person who loves cost savings, as long as we retain the efficiency of our operations for our constituents.

So through you, Mr. Speaker, may I ask Representative Butler to define those cost savings, how are we going to be achieving them, and what is the amount that is estimated? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Butler.

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

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Through you, Mr. Speaker, well, OFA, I believe in the fiscal analysis used the word, uncertain. And if OFA used the word uncertain, I think it'd be hard for me to come up with a number. But I will say that once these agencies start collaborating on supportive housing initiatives, I think after you start seeing the first RFPs go out, we'll get a chance to see what the financial impact is. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Noujaim.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the answer, and obviously I do support this piece of legislation. Thank you, sir. Thank you, Representative Butler. See you in Waterbury.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir.

Would you care to remark further on the bill before us?

Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A couple questions through you to the good chair of Housing?

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Please proceed, sir.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and the good chair, you may have answered this, but I can't hear anything. So and maybe it's my sinuses clogging my head up here. But I've been a very strong advocate, as you have been, for supportive housing, and the role that that plays in an individual's life. The value of supportive housing. I grew up in supportive housing.

So through that, and I read you had mentioned the component that was taken out, the criteria that was taken out for supportive housing, and is it my understanding that the working class that we could say the working class that don't make enough money to say to get it, they would fall under, you know, availability for supportive housing. Is that true, through you, Mr. Speaker?

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Butler.

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I'm having a very difficult time hearing you. But I believe --

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Pause for a moment.

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

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-- was about the eligibility in the criteria by removing the four criteria that was in previously in place. We are considering all individuals and families that are homeless. So I hope that answers the good gentleman's questions. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. If members could just take their conversations outside or keep the volume down. The members are having a difficult time hearing each other.

Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Because I do believe that this is -- you know, we could say is this the role of government, but this is a good piece of legislation, and the value of it to help people that are in a state of influx in terms of where they're living. Maybe they've gone through a struggle financially, and have -- had a home, and now just need that, a little bit support role as I -- my family did when I was growing up.

So through you, as we open this up, and I like the departments that you've added. I mean, we always think about those veterans that can't find a home because they, you know, as we have some legislation that -- they needed this security deposit or they couldn't find a place.

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They ended up being homeless because they couldn't get in the door of housing. So how are we addressing the -- maybe the amount that supportive housing units, in the future, is that the role of this collaboration to help identify units and then find the funding to support those? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Butler.

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I believe that's correct.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Thank you, to the good chair, and I appreciate being able to work through the noise in here and the good answers. And I am in strong support of this legislation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir.

Would you care to remark? Would you care to remark further on the bill that is before us?

Representative Molgano.

REP. MOLGANO (144th):

Good morning, Mr. Speaker, thank you. I, too, want

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to support this bill. If I may, a couple of questions to the proponent of the bill?

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. MOLGANO (144th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you, do we have an estimate on the number of people we're looking to serve by this initiative.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Butler.

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, no. I really don't have a number to provide the good gentleman.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Molgano.

REP. MOLGANO (144th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the good chairman of Housing tell me how much money has been allocated? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Butler.

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, the last RP that went out was for 20 million. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

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SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Molgano.

REP. MOLGANO (144th):

I thank you from the good answer from the good gentleman. Just one last question, if I may. Through you, Mr. Speaker, are we focusing on certain areas of the state to add units of housing? Through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Butler.

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, no. We're considering the state in its entirety. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Molgano.

REP. MOLGANO (144th):

Thank you. I thank the good gentleman, and I urge my colleagues to please support this very important bill.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir.

Would you care to remark further on the bill before us?

Representative Yaccarino.

REP. YACCARINO (87th):

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Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good afternoon.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Good afternoon, sir.

REP. YACCARINO (87th):

I'm in support of this bill, but I do have a couple questions for the good chair of Housing.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. YACCARINO (87th):

I'm reading in the bill, I think it's line 5, it's a component of the Veteran's Affairs. Will you coordinate with Rocky Hill, Commissioner Schwartz, for the homeless veterans and their families? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Butler.

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

Could the good gentleman please repeat his answer --
I mean, question?

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Yaccarino, could you repeat your question?

REP. YACCARINO (87th):

Will do, sir. Through you, Mr. Speaker, on line five there's a component of you'll be coordinating with Housing

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and Veteran's Affairs of Connecticut. Will that be through Rocky Hill, through the Commissioner, and will that be to obviously finding homes for veterans and their families. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Butler.

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I believe there's going to be a separate setup for Rocky Hill. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Yaccarino.

REP. YACCARINO (87th):

Thank you, for that answer. I work somewhat with the Columbus House in New Haven, and that is for homeless veterans. Will you be coordinating at all with the Columbus House in New Haven, Connecticut, or South Park in Hartford? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Butler.

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

Again, I'm having difficulty hearing. I heard some reference to the Columbus House, but I didn't hear --

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Representative Yaccarino --

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

-- before or after.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

-- could you repeat your question?

REP. YACCARINO (87th):

I have to put it closer. Through you, Mr. Speaker, there's a Columbus House in New Haven, Connecticut, for homeless veterans and homeless men and women. And then South Park in Hartford. Will this bill with data collection or information, will you coordinate getting homes or putting these men and women -- you know, providing homes for them. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Butler.

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure they have their initiatives. But what -- I believe what this is intended to do is to address the homeless situation going forward. I know that Columbus House in New Haven does a great job on medical respite. I think we need to do more of that. And -- but this is to prepare and have these agencies work together on preparing RFPs for homeless situations going forward. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

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SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Yaccarino.

REP. YACCARINO (87th):

Thank you, for those answers. I think it's a really good initiative, and something we have to look at.

Unfortunately in our state, and really in our country, there's so many homelessness. And veterans and for all people alike. So I do support this bill, and hopefully we'll work on continually to work on to address this problem and put people back to work and provide them homes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir.

Would you care to remark? Would you care to remark further on the bill before us.

Representative Candelaria.

REP. CANDELARIA (95th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a question through you to the proponent?

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. CANDELARIA (95th):

Mr. Speaker, we're -- we're giving discretion to the entities that administer the program so that they can

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determine eligibility. Now by giving them more discretion, does this open up the process more for individuals to be eligible for the program? And a follow-up question is, have we allocated dollars to anticipate an expansion within the homeless program. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Butler.

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, two part questions, I love it. Yes, by opening up the eligibility we're hoping to make sure that nobody gets excluded from the process. And two, in terms of the money, I know the last RFP that went out was for \$20 million. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Candelaria.

REP. CANDELARIA (95th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, and can we -- do we have an anticipation of how many people that \$20 million will serve? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Butler.

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

I'm sorry, your voice kind of trailed off at the end.

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Could you please repeat your question?

REP. CANDELARIA (95th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, do you have an anticipated number of individuals that will be served with the allocation of \$20 million? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Butler.

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, no, I don't have an exact number that would be served. But we have an initiative in the state to end homelessness in ten years. We started a couple of years ago, so hopefully we'll get to a point where we'll eventually address the whole homeless population. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Candelaria.

REP. CANDELARIA (95th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, and one last question. How -- how do we anticipate serving those 18 to 23-year-olds? And who will be actually ensuring when they're transitioning out of foster care and ensuring that they're provided or afforded the ability to qualify for the program. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

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Representative Butler.

REP. BUTLER (72nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the collaboration of all the agencies that I listed will work and come up with the details to address the good Representative's questions. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Candelaria.

REP. CANDELARIA (95th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the great gentleman of the Housing Committee for his answers. Thank you so much.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir.

Would you care to remark? Would you care to remark further on the bill before us? If not, staff and guests in the well of the house. Members take your seats, and the machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll. The House of Representatives is voting by roll. Will members return to the Chamber immediately.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Have all members voted? Have all members voted?

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Members, please check the board to make sure your vote is properly cast. If all the members have voted, the machine will be locked, and the Clerk will take a tally

Will the Clerk please announce the tally?

THE CLERK:

Senate Bill -- Senate Bill 364 in concurrence with the Senate.

Total number voting	139
Necessary for passage	70
Those voting Yea	139
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	12

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The bill passes in concurrence with the Senate. Are there any announcements or introductions?

Representative Hilda Santiago.

REP. SANTIAGO (84th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In celebrating the Third Annual Technical School Day, which was introduced by Representative Michelle Cook from Torrington, I am so proud to have you here today, the Wilcox Technical School, right in the Chambers. These are not only students from Meriden, but they also students from Durham, Cheshire, Newington, Southington, Berlin, and Wallingford. I might

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**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SENATE**

**PROCEEDINGS
2014**

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Seeing no objection, so ordered. Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

Also on Page 35, Calendar 77, Senate Bill Number 364
AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REVISIONS TO THE SUPPORTIVE
HOUSING INITIATIVE STATUTE. Favorable Report of the
Committee on Housing.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bartolomeo.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I move
acceptance of the Joint Committee's Joint Favorable
Report and I urge passage of this bill, please.

THE CHAIR:

On acceptance and passage. Will you remark?

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Yes, thank you, Madam President. This bill is in
reference to the Interagency Council on Supportive
Housing, and that is an agency, which does prioritize
the housing initiative.

It's currently comprised of the Department of Children
and Families, Department of Mental Health and
Addiction Services, Department of Corrections, Court
Support Services, Department of Social Services and
CHFA.

What this bill would do is to add to that, the
Department of Developmental Disabilities and Veteran
Affairs and it would make certain that all of these
departments would collaborate in administering the
state's permanent supportive housing initiative and I
would urge passage of the bill, please.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark? Will you remark? Seeing none,
Senator Bartolomeo.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I would
request that we put this on the Consent Calendar,
please.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered. Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, there
are two items to mark Go at this time. I believe they
might have been passed temporarily earlier. The first
one is back as on Calendar Page 16, Calendar 182,
Senate Bill 101.

And then the next one is Calendar Page 36 under
Matters Returned, Calendar 88, Senate Bill 100. Would
ask that those two items be the next two called in
sequence.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On Page 16, Calendar 182, Senate Bill Number 101 AN
ACT ESTABLISHING FIRST RESPONDER DAY. Favorable
Report of the Committee on Public Safety.

THE CHAIR:

Good evening. Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Good evening, Madam President. I move acceptance of
the Joint Committee's Favorable Report, Madam, and
passage of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

Consent Calendar Number 2. On Page 6, Calendar 63,
Senate Bill Number 19.

On Page 7, Calendar 64, Senate Bill Number 20.

Also on Page 7, Calendar 71, Senate Bill 241.

On Page 12, Calendar 156, Senate Bill Number 207.

And on Page 14, Calendar 165, Senate Bill 115.

Page 15, Calendar 171, Senate Bill Number 313.

And on Page 16, Calendar 179, Senate Bill Number 376.

Also on Page 16, Calendar 182, Senate Bill Number 101.

And on Page 17, Calendar 184, Senate Bill Number 247.

Page 19, Calendar 200, Senate Bill 205.

On Page 20, Calendar 201, Senate Bill Number 82.

On Page 35, Calendar 69, Senate Bill 63.

Calendar 75, Senate Bill 112.

And Calendar 77, Senate Bill Number 364.

On Page 36, Calendar 88, Senate Bill 100.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President. When the Clerk was reading those items, wanted to inquire on the status of Calendar Page 7, Calendar 72, Senate Bill 92.

THE CLERK:

And I should have read, Page 7, Calendar 72, Senate Bill 92.

THE CHAIR:

That's also on the Consent Calendar. Is that correct?

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, could I ask you about Page 8. I don't know if there has been marked, which bill, Page 8, Calendar 76, 113? Did you say that?

THE CLERK:

Yes, Madam President. It is on the Second Consent Calendar for today.

THE CHAIR:

And Page 9, Calendar 84, Bill 201. Was that read, sir?

THE CLERK:

Yes, ma'am.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you very much. At this time, Mr. Clerk, will you please call for a Roll Call Vote on the Consent Calendar. The machine will be opened.

THE CLERK:

Immediate Roll Call is ordered in the Senate.

Immediate Roll Call on the Second Consent Calendar for today is ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

If all members have voted, all members voted, the machine will be closed. I ask the Clerk to please call the tally.

THE CLERK:

On the Second Consent Calendar for today.

Total number voting

36

Necessary for adoption	19
Those voting Yea	36
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

The Consent Calendar passes. Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes, Madam President. Thank you. Madam President, would move that all of the bills referred to various Committees earlier in the Session, that those bills be immediately transmitted to the Committees to which they were referred.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered, sir.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you. Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, if the Clerk would now call an item that was marked passed temporarily earlier, and that was Calendar Page 9, Calendar 108, Senate Bill 36.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On Page 9, Calendar 108, Substitute for Senate Bill Number 36 AN ACT CONCERNING THE GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE. Favorable Report of the Committee on Public Health, and there are amendments.

THE CHAIR:

Good evening, Senator Gerratana.

SENATOR GERRATANA:

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we have up to 150,000. That is the only difference in the substitute language from what was posted.

And we'll be making that available if you'd like to testify knowing that please do and it will move forward at a future meeting which we would be voting upon. So seeing that I now would look for Representative Patricia Miller to testify. And we will go back to her. Commissioner Klein. Good morning.

COMMISSIONER EVONNE KLEIN: Good morning, Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Butler and members of the committee. My name is Evonne Klein and I'm the Commissioner of the Department of Housing for the State of Connecticut. Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you this morning regarding several bills that impact the Department of Housing. The Department of Housing supports Senate Bill 363 a part of -- a part of the Department of Housing's legislative package, AN ACT TRANSFERRING FUNDS DEPOSITED IN THE COMMUNITY INVESTMENT ACCOUNT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING.

SB364
HB5436
HB5437

In 2005 the State legislature established the community investment account, CIA to fund affordable housing development, farmland, open spaces and historic preservation. CIA is comprised of recording fees collected for all documents entered into municipal land records and is distributed amongst the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority, CHFA, the Department of Economic and Community Development and the

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morning. During the time of continued fiscal restraints it is important for agencies to constantly reassess priorities, ensuring limited resources are utilized towards the greatest benefit.

The Department fully support Senate Bill 364 a part of the Department of Housing's legislative package, AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REVISIONS TO THE SUPPORTIVE HOUSING INITIATIVE STATUTE. Section 17A-485C of the General Statutes requires the Department and other agencies as well as CHFA and the court support service division of the judicial branch to collaborate on establishing permanent supportive housing initiatives to provide additional affordable housing units and support services for eligible individuals.

Senate Bill 364 adds the Department of Developmental Services and Veterans' Affairs, new members of the State interagency committee on supportive housing to the list of already collaborating agencies and broaden the eligibility for supportive housing assistance.

Permanent supportive housing is a vital resource that provides low income individuals and families who have serious persistent issues such as a mental health or substance abuse disorder with the tools and resources they need to face these challenges and improve their lives. By expanding the eligibility criteria this bill provides the interagency committee on supportive housing with the flexibility to prioritize new populations for support as they deem necessary.

HB 5436
HB 5437

REP. BACCHIOCHI: Sure.

DAISY FRANKLIN: -- that does the same kind of work probably could also do it.

REP. BACCHIOCHI: Okay. Well thank you for coming up. I appreciate it.

DAISY FRANKLIN: Thank you.

REP. BUTLER: Are there any other questions? Okay. Yes, Sir. I just wanted to see if you were going to turn around and come back. But -- but anyways. But yes. I just want to let people again know that -- that we have several different public hearings going on and people are serving on different committees so you'll see members going in and out because they have responsibility on the other committees. And at this point I'm going to turn this over to Senator Bartolomeo to continue.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO: Thank you. So we now have Tom Fiorentino and after Tom will be Erin Kemple.

THOMAS FIORENTINO: Thank you. Good afternoon, Senator Bartolomeo, members of the committee. I'm here to testify in support of Senate Bill 364. And I want to say upfront I have no special expertise. I'm just a dad. I'm a parent of a 23 year old with Down's syndrome and he's got a lot of assets. He's ready to move into the community soon yet under the current system we have there's just no way.

there will be any support from the Department of Developmental Services for him to do that.

Currently DDS administers a bifurcated system where most people are served by private providers who are grossly underpaid. A sizeable minority are served by folks in State run institutions, group homes, et cetera. That part of the system sad to say is -- I think the best adjective would be it's extravagant. Just an example for you and I know some of you are probably familiar but the average cost for a resident in one of our regional is over \$400,000 per person per year, same at Southbury Training School.

If the current system continues the way it is what happens is the thousands of people who are currently waiting for services will continue to wait for services because there simply isn't enough money to fund the system we have and also be able to deal with the folks who are already waiting and the new folks as you can well imagine who come into the system every year. Just real quickly there are right now on what's called the emergency waiting list about 70 people. And I think individually their stories would break your hearts to hear them.

Elderly parents in their seventies and eighties in failing health who are told that their child will get a placement when the last caregiver dies. It's not a system I think that we would knowingly impose upon the citizens of Connecticut but by default it's what we've ended up with.

DDS clearly needs to find a way to provide residential supports to people who are on their waiting list but again this bifurcated system is making it impossible and even the private provider part is expensive, more expensive in Connecticut than in most places. In the past we've relied on institutions. We've moved away from that to what are called group homes. But basically the approach was the same which was one size fits all.

Today the thinking among disability advocates, providers and the folks who are waiting to be placed is that it's not what kind of group home is best for you but rather where can you live with the proper level of supports that maximizes your ability to be a full contributing member of the community. So I know I've heard the -- heard the bell.

What I'll say is we appreciate the fact that DDS is now brought to the table with other agencies to look at supportive housing in a more creative way because long term that's exactly I feel, we feel what needs to be done. So thank you for your patience and the opportunity to testify.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO: Thank you, Sir. Did you submit written testimony?

THOMAS FIORENTINO: I have it here.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO: You have it. Okay. So when you're done if you wouldn't mind giving that to

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our Clerk, Brandon. But are there any from -- Representative Diminico.

REP. DIMINICO: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just quite -- it's quite unusual that this topic comes up. I actually sat down this morning with -- with representatives from all different groups with SEIU and heard a lot of the stories of that. It was just amazing. And -- and I -- when I was asked to speak I basically said thank god for the families. The families this is a support system. And the system that we've had in place for over the years -- years back it was -- it was vacated and then the new assistant that came in with the group homes really doesn't -- doesn't meet the needs.

The word supportive housing is really the way to do things. It takes care of the needs of the individuals support -- provides supportive services and is much more cost effective. And it's -- and I kind of look at this and I say geez I don't know what took so long. It -- for -- because it -- basically the way the supportive housing has been over the years it's really been kind of like private nonprofits like CHR and stuff of that nature that had access to funds that would create the supportive housing.

You just had one right in -- within my own town of Manchester and there could be another one. So I think this is long overdue. Long overdue. And I guess the question to you is is your son on -- on a waiting list because --

THOMAS FIORENTINO: Well we asked for him to be put on it. Whether he's put on it or not I don't know. But if he is put on it he would go in thousands on that list.

REP. DIMINICO: Yeah.

THOMAS FIORENTINO: And to be fair to DDS and I don't know if -- they've recognized that the current system is unsustainable and they should really be applauded for that because past administrations never made that -- came to that conclusion. Our concern is is okay but people out there who are waiting need a plan. If you tell people to be creative which they have then you need to give some guidance and -- and what we're saying is that bills like that bring DDS to the table to work with people who know how to do supportive housing I think it can only you know help us move the ball down the field.

REP. DIMINICO: Well I did hear today people have been on the waitlist for 20 years. I mean to say it's not sustainable in an understatement. I mean if you've got a 20 year waiting list out there.

THOMAS FIORENTINO: And again we've had family days here. And I've really appreciated the attention and the time that legislators have given us and the families but when you look around those rooms and you see some of the caregivers and you think who's giving them care because they're really -- you know and the people who go to DDS and say my husband died, I'm alone, I had hip replacement, I have this

malady or that malady and again it's not that the DDS people are hard hearted but they're saying well under our current system really when the last caregiver dies.

And then the trauma. Think about a child who's only known his parents, who's only lived with them. Now they're both gone. Now the State says we'll find you a place. So the trauma of that transition. First of all the trauma of them losing parents and many of our folks can't imagine they'll ever lose their parents. But that's -- that's something they imagine. What has happened? Now the State comes in and says we'll -- we found a place for you in a group home maybe 20 miles away, 15 miles away with people you've never met, in a town you've never lived in. But that's -- that's our system and I know both sides of the aisle, I know people in Connecticut and the legislature we don't want that system. So I think this is a step towards changing it.

REP. DIMINICO: I'd be very curious on the funding side looking at all the different organizations that are written into this bill. I see CHFA, CHFA I think would probably be -- I'd be curious where they stand as far as their focus on the financing of this. I mean it -- the supportive housing is a big part but they're -- it's not for all (inaudible) but it certainly would mainstream people into really -- into semi-independent living if not independent living. I'm going to make some phone calls and I'd be curious to see how this can move along.

THOMAS FIORENTINO: I'd appreciate that very much,
Sir.

REP. DIMINICO: Thank you very much.

THOMAS FIORENTINO: Thank you.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO: Other questions by committee?
Mr. Fiorentino, it sounds as though you do come
up here often. Is that correct?

THOMAS FIORENTINO: Only recently. Yes, Ma'am.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO: Well I think --

THOMAS FIORENTINO: I've been here I think three
times in the past month.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO: I thank you for that and I
thank you for advocating for your son and for
others. I do want to point out that this
particular bill is making technical changes to
statute which is simply -- it's not developing
anything new necessarily. It's just adding
those agencies. But seeing as you -- you do
come up here often I would encourage you maybe
to reach out to the clerks in the human
services committee as well as even the
appropriations committee because I think that
that's what we need to do is many of -- of the
housing programs that we have that are for
supportive housing sometimes there are funding
rounds that go out that include the housing but
not the support.

And that's something that my cochair and I have been working on and hoping to see more of those rounds include both. There's also times where we have people that are placed in public housing that may have a voucher for support but then that voucher is pulled. So we're -- we're aware of a lot of those challenges and this particular committee doesn't have the authority over the funding for the services part of it so I would encourage you to become vocal in the committees for human services and possibly even appropriations and our Clerk, Brandon, I'm sure could help connect you with --

THOMAS FIORENTINO: Thank you.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO: -- phone numbers of those clerks to find out what might be coming up on their agendas because I -- I support your request for more services and I think it's a valuable -- valid one.

THOMAS FIORENTINO: Thank you. And I appreciate that advice and I recognize the limit -- that this bill is limited. It is though something that I wanted to support. Even having DDS at the table where supportive housing is discussed so that they can get more or less up to speed on what else is going on out there because I think that's vital. But I recognize that this is not by any means a panacea. And so I -- and I will take your advice. Thank you.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO: But I -- and I do appreciate your coming to us because you're right they

need -- they need to be at that table. I just want to see more done so I'm trying to --

THOMAS FIORENTINO: Got it. Thank you.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO: Encourage you to continue to be vocal and participate in the process. Thank you, Sir.

THOMAS FIORENTINO: Thank you.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO: Next we have Erin Kemple and then after Erin would be Carol Martin.

ERIN KEMPLE: Good afternoon. My name is Erin Kemple. I'm from the Connecticut Fair Housing Center and I'm here to testify in support of Senate Bill 365 but actually asking for a couple of changes before it's passed out of the committee.

I'm the Executive Director of the Connecticut Fair Housing -- Connecticut Fair Housing Center. We're a statewide nonprofit that addresses issues of fair housing, fair lending and home ownership right. In addition to assisting individuals who think that they may have been the victim of housing discrimination the center work with the State of Connecticut as well as other governmental entities to ensure that the are following the fair housing laws and also that their policies and their practices affirmatively further fair housing.

There were questions earlier about how the waiting list system actually works and I wanted



TESTIMONY SUBMITTED TO THE HOUSING COMMITTEE
MARCH 4, 2014

*Eric Chatman, President-Executive Director
Connecticut Housing Finance Authority*

Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Butler and members of the Housing Committee, my name is Eric Chatman, President-Executive Director of the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA). On behalf of CHFA, I am providing my comments on legislation before the Housing Committee.

Raised Bill 363 An Act Transferring Funds Deposited In The Community Investment Account To The Department Of Housing

The bill redirects funds distributed from the Community Investment Account (CIA) from the CHFA to the Department of Housing. CHFA supports this legislation.

CIA was established through legislation in 2005 requiring the collection of recording fees for all documents entered into the municipal land records. CIA provided a new opportunity to further the goals of protecting and preserving the character of Connecticut now and into the future by providing funds that assist projects or programs across the four sectors of Affordable Housing, Historic Preservation, Open Space Acquisition, and Agriculture and Dairy.

Since the adoption of the CIA, there is now a new Department of Housing and the Commissioner of Housing is also the Chairwoman of the CHFA Board of Directors making the redirection of these funds appropriate.

Raised Bill 364 An Act Concerning The Department Of Housing's Recommendations For Revisions To The Supportive Housing Initiative Statute

CHFA supports this legislation that expands eligibility for supportive housing initiatives and adds the Department of Developmental Services and the Department of Veteran's Affairs to the State Interagency Committee on Supportive Housing. This legislation makes new populations eligible for the resources of housing and support services to individuals and families that are homeless or at risk for homelessness.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony to the Housing Committee.



Evonne M. Klein
Commissioner

Department of Housing

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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSING COMMITTEE 3/4/2014

Evonne Klein, Commissioner
Department of Housing

HB 5436
HB 5437

Good morning Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Butler and members of the committee. My name is Evonne Klein and I am the Commissioner of the Department of Housing (DOH). Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you regarding several bills that impact DOH.

DOH supports Senate Bill 363, a part of DOH's legislative package, - AN ACT TRANSFERRING FUNDS DEPOSITED IN THE COMMUNITY INVESTMENT ACCOUNT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING.

In 2005, the state legislature established the Community Investment Account (CIA) to fund affordable housing development and farmland, open spaces, and historic preservation. CIA is comprised of recording fees collected for all documents entered into municipal land records and is distributed amongst the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA), the Department of Economic and Community Development, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and the Department of Agriculture. Every three months, CHFA receives twenty-five percent of the account to supplement new or existing affordable housing programs, which totals approximately \$4 million annually.

Senate Bill 363 directs CHFA's portion of the CIA funding to DOH. As the new lead agency on housing, DOH is uniquely qualified to make policy decisions regarding how best to allocate this affordable housing funding. CIA funds will provide DOH with much needed flexible funding that can supplement existing successful programs or innovative new ones, fill small gaps in project funding in between competitive funding rounds, and finance any new program or project the department may wish to develop to reach its affordable housing goals.

However, DOH opposes the addition of language that annually directs one hundred fifty thousand dollars to "supplement technical assistance for resident participation and foster the development of independent, resident-led organizations in public housing communities." While the department supports the cultivation of resident participation, we disagree with a specific set-aside that limits DOH's flexibility in determining how best to utilize the CIA funding. If this bill moves forward with a set-aside, we respectfully request that Co-Chairs amend the language to state "Up to one hundred fifty thousand dollars annually..." During a time of continued fiscal constraints, it is important for agencies to constantly reassess priorities, ensuring limited resources are utilized towards the greatest benefit.

DOH fully supports Senate Bill 364, a part of DOH's legislative package, - AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REVISIONS TO THE SUPPORTIVE HOUSING INITIATIVE STATUTE.

Section 17a-485c of the general statutes requires DOH and other agencies as well as CHFA and the Court Support Services Division of the Judicial Branch to collaborate on establishing permanent supportive housing initiatives to provide additional affordable housing units and support services for eligible individuals. Senate

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Bill 364 adds the Departments of Developmental Services and Veterans' Affairs, new members of the State Interagency Committee on Supportive Housing, to the list of collaborating agencies and broadens the eligibility for supportive housing assistance. Permanent supportive housing is a vital resource that provides low-income individuals and families, who have serious, persistent issues such as a mental health or substance abuse disorder, with the tools and resources they need to face these challenges and improve their lives. By expanding the eligibility criteria, this bill provides the Interagency Committee on Supportive Housing with the flexibility to prioritize new populations for support as they deem necessary.

House Bills 5436 and 5437 - AN ACT ESTABLISHING A PILOT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE MEDICAL RESPITE FOR THE HOMELESS and AN ACT CREATING INCENTIVES FOR YOUNG PROFESSIONALS TO LIVE IN URBAN AREAS

DOH does not currently have the funding, nor is this funding included in the Governor's budget proposal, to support the two programs that would be created by House Bills 5436 and 5437. For these reasons, DOH cannot support these bills.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES
A Healthcare Service Agency

Dannel P. Malloy
Governor

Patricia A. Rehmer, MSN
Commissioner

Memorandum:

TO: Senator Bartolomeo
Representative Butler
Members of the Housing Committee

FROM: Commissioner Patricia Rehmer, DMHAS

DATE: March 4, 2014

SUBJECT: Written Testimony on Senate Bill 364

Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Butler, and distinguished members of the Housing Committee: thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on SB 364 AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REVISIONS TO THE SUPPORTIVE HOUSING INITIATIVE STATUTE

DMHAS fully supports this proposal before you today. This bill adds an additional two agencies to Connecticut's nationally recognized Interagency Collaborative. In addition, it simplifies the eligibility criteria for homeless individuals with disabilities that are eligible for supportive housing. Supportive Housing is an evidence based practice shown to reliably solve homelessness for those individuals that receive this intervention. Expanding state agency support and clarifying eligibility criteria only strengthens Connecticut's resolve to address the issue of homelessness in the State as well as creating an environment in which additional support and new ideas are brought to the program. Thank you for the opportunity to present this to testimony

McCall, Brandon

From: Kenneth Bobenski <kenbobwest@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Tuesday, March 04, 2014 8:36 AM
To: HSGTestimony
Subject: SB 364 Support

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Kathy& Ken Bobenski
113 West Street
Cromwell, CT 06416

We are writing in support of S.B. No. 364 AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REVISIONS TO THE SUPPORTIVE HOUSING INITIATIVE STATUTE. Our non-ambulatory daughter who requires total assistance with feeding, dressing, and personal hygiene still lives with us. Due to unavoidable aging health issues in the future, we may not be physically able to care for her in 10 or 15 years with the constant lifting as the primary factor. We are in support of safe housing alternatives for people with varying needs (her intelligence is her strength). Please support Senate bill 364. Thank you especially Paul Doyle and Christy Carpino our district people and all interested and helpful Connecticut legislators.

Respectfully,
Kathy, Carly & Ken Bobenski

Testimony of Thomas Fiorentino
15 Apple Hill Road, West Hartford

S.B. No 364 AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING'S
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REVISIONS TO THE SUPPORTIVE HOUSING INITIATIVE
STATUTE.

Thank you to Sen. Bartolomeo, Rep. Butler and Members of the Housing Committee for the opportunity to submit testimony on S.B. 364.

I am the parent of a 23 year old son with Down Syndrome who, I expect, will be ready to live with a good deal of independence in the community in the not too distant future.

Sadly, under the current system, he will not receive any help from the Department of Developmental Services.

DDS is currently administering a bifurcated system of residential assistance for adults with developmental disabilities. The majority are being served by underfunded private providers. Their employees include hardworking men and women, union and non-union, who, in my opinion, are grossly underpaid for their valuable work

A substantial minority are being served at wildly inefficient state-employee run facilities that provide assistance at a price tag that is too high to be sustainable. For example, over 500 individuals are served at Southbury Training School and the 5 Regional Centers at a cost of approximately \$400,000 per person annually. State run group homes cost almost three times more to operate than comparable homes operated by private providers.

If this current system continues, thousands of individuals with intellectual disabilities, who are either desperately waiting for residential services, or who will need to access them tomorrow, will never receive services due to a lack of funds.

The result is that, right now, according to DDS' own figures, the residential waiting list includes 70 people that the department considers "emergencies", and over 900 additional people that are categorized as "Priority 1", meaning they will need residential supports in the next year. This does not even include the over 1,300 additional individuals that DDS identifies as individuals that will be seeking residential services over the longer term (Priority 2 and 3), nor the almost 1,000 that will become eligible for DDS adult services in the next 3 years.

Clearly, DDS needs to find a way to provide residential supports to people on the waiting list, but the current system with its high costs is preventing that from happening. Initiatives like SB 364 can help.

Past systems relied upon institutions and, more recently, group homes—which were one size fits all systems.

Today, the thinking among disability advocates and providers is not "what kind of group home is best for you", but rather, "where can you live, with the proper level of supports, that maximizes your ability to live as a full, contributing member of the community." For many people, that is a home or apartment, with or without roommates, outfitted with assistive technology, and with supports funded in part by the State, and in part provided by family and friends

This has the distinct advantage of being less expensive than institutions and even traditional group homes, while at the same time providing a true opportunity for people to become part of their community. This is "supportive housing."

The legislature has provided funding for supportive housing through DMHAS and DSS, and SB 364 extends the initiative to include DDS. I **urge your support**.

I do not believe that DDS has, right now, either an effective plan or sufficient expertise throughout the department to move to the new paradigm of supported community living. I do think that, unlike past administrations, there has been a recognition that things must change, and a willingness to implement that change. By including DDS in this bill, you send a clear message that the agency must move more quickly and with greater creativity.

The number of individuals waiting for DDS residential services grows daily. The State must develop a system that provides needed services at a sustainable cost, —rather than simply having individuals languish on a residential waiting list.

Supportive housing, like that envisioned in SB 364 can be part of that system

Thank you again for the opportunity to present this testimony.

McCall, Brandon

From: greatandpowerfulmom@cox.net
Sent: Monday, March 03, 2014 10:37 PM
To: HSGTestimony
Subject: Senate Bill 364 AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REVISIONS TO THE SUPPORTIVE HOUSING INITIATIVE STATUTE.

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

I am writing to support the idea that DDS should be participating in supportive housing initiatives to benefit its clients, and I am writing especially on behalf of a particular group of people: adults with autism who are in need of services from the DDS Autism Division.

I am the mother of a 21-year old son with autism. His name is Andy. He has extremely inadequate language ability (bottom 2%), but because his full scale i.q. measures in the low 70's, he is not considered intellectually disabled, despite the fact that he will never be able to live independently, completely support himself, or manage his own affairs. He is on the waiting list for services from the autism division, but is currently receiving no services, except for occasional contact with BRS, which is attempting to help him find a part-time job.

Andy's future is an enormous worry for his father and me. He is naive and vulnerable. We do not know what will happen to him or where he will live when we are gone. While I have a lot of sympathy for the parents protesting the recently established "age in place" policy, I need to point out that for people like my son Andy the state currently makes NO PROVISION AT ALL for housing, ever, NOT EVEN IN AN EMERGENCY! If my husband and I were suddenly killed in a car accident or something, Andy's sister, a struggling artist, would have to care for him, and if she couldn't do it, he would be homeless. A person like my son, through no fault of his own, is just as incapable of keeping a roof over his or her own head as someone who meets the statutory definition of intellectual disability, and in my opinion, he is more deserving than drug addicts or alcoholics who already get this kind of help.

So, my hope is that DDS will be enabled to participate in supportive housing initiatives, AND if it is so enabled I hope it will give some consideration to the many adults with autism who need supportive housing, because this need will not just go away if we ignore it.

Elizabeth Zownir
61 Avondale Rd.
Manchester, CT 06042

860-643-2540



Dannel P. Malloy
Governor

State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services



Terrence W. Macy, Ph.D.
Commissioner

Joseph W. Drexler, Esq.
Deputy Commissioner

**DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES TESTIMONY
BEFORE THE HOUSING COMMITTEE**

March 4, 2014

Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Butler, and members of the Housing Committee. I am Terrence W. Macy, Ph.D., Commissioner of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). Thank you for the opportunity to submit testify in support of Raised Bill No. 364 – An Act Concerning the Department of Housing’s Recommendations for Revisions to the Supportive Housing Initiatives Statutes.

DDS supports the revisions of the supportive housing initiative statute which adds DDS to the list of agencies collaborating on such initiatives. DDS’s mission is to support lifelong planning and partner with others to promote meaningful opportunities for individuals to fully participate as valued members of their communities. The establishment of permanent supportive housing initiatives and our activities in concert with other agencies as member of the Interagency Committee on Supportive Housing align with this agency mission. Through a deepening commitment as member of the Interagency Committee DDS gains the ability to more fully participate in the development of criteria used for prioritizing development of appropriate housing models for the individuals we support as we take on the responsibilities of evaluating proposals for housing development with our partner agencies.

Specifically, DDS supports the removal of the language in section (b) of 17a-485c. While this language served to prioritize needs of specific populations, it did so in such a way as to potentially limit applicability to other groups who may arise as a priority. The language establishing eligibility in section (a) is both sufficiently targeted to match priorities of all member groups and citizens of Connecticut, yet broad enough to not limit eligibility or unduly prioritize needs of one population above another. In changing times it is beneficial to have latitude in establishing priorities from year to year or as needed.

As DDS strives to meet the needs of individuals transitioning from restrictive 24-hour support models to inclusive, community-based supports in the least restrictive manner, the opportunity to advocate for scattered site development and to participate in the selection process of such developments is essential.

We look forward to continued collaborations such as these and appreciate the opportunity to participate and contribute.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify on Raised Bill No. 364. Please contact Christine Pollio Cooney, DDS Director of Legislative Affairs at 860 418-6066 if you have any questions for us.

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Testimony of Walter Glomb on Raised Senate Bill No. 364
AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
REVISIONS TO THE SUPPORTIVE HOUSING INITIATIVE STATUTE.

Good morning Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Butler and members of the Housing Committee. My name is Walter Glomb. I am a resident of Rockville. I have three sons. My youngest, Nick, who is now 25 years old, lives with Down Syndrome. Nick receives Supported Employment services from the Connecticut Department of Developmental Services under a Medicaid waiver.

I am here today on behalf of my son and others who live with intellectual disabilities to speak IN FAVOR of Raised Senate Bill No. 364 CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REVISIONS TO THE SUPPORTIVE HOUSING INITIATIVE STATUTE.

As a parent of a child who lives with an intellectual disability, I have been active in a number of advocacy organizations. I served on the board of directors of the Connecticut Down Syndrome Congress where I was the president for four years. I am presently a leader of the Family Empowerment Task Force, a statewide organization of parents. I have also served on committees and advisory councils for the Department of Developmental Services, the Department of Rehabilitation Services and the Department of Education. Through these activities I have direct personal experience with hundreds of families of individuals who live with intellectual disabilities - and insight to our state services.

Adults who live with intellectual disabilities have special needs and are at risk of homelessness when their parents or other family member are no longer able to care for them. Adults who live with intellectual disabilities are generally unemployed or underemployed and have limited means to pay for housing. According to the Department of Developmental Services, there are now more than 3,500 individuals with intellectual disabilities in need of housing. This population needs more supported housing options than the limited residential services currently offered by DDS.

Currently, my son Nick lives with me and we have just begun to explore ways to have Nick live in his own apartment with appropriate supports. He certainly does not require the full-time, custodial care of a group home. He just needs some help managing his affairs. For the past year I have been meeting with groups of parents who are creating new sustainable housing solutions for their adult children with intellectual disabilities. At meetings in Groton, Meriden, Norwalk, Danbury, Bristol, Willimantic and Hartford more than a hundred parents have contributed their ideas, their concerns and their inspirational housing solutions. Through this process, a picture is beginning to emerge. It is a varied landscape of highly individualized solutions.

It is clear that we have come a very long way from the one-size-fits-all institutional solutions of the past. Generally, people are living in their own homes. These homes may be private residences or rented apartments. Some with live with 24-7 care - others with occasional supports. Where more than one individual shares the residence, there are generally less than five individuals in the home. Some use staff that are managed by an agency and many hire their own staff.

Extending eligibility for supportive housing initiatives to adults with intellectual disabilities will give families one more tool to insure that their loved ones will have a secure permanent home.

Thank you for your attention.