

Housing Committee

Public Hearing

March 4, 2021

Senator Lopes and Representative McGee and distinguished members of the housing committee.

My name is Kellyann Day and I am the CEO of New Reach, an organization that is working to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring. New Reach provides eviction prevention services, crisis services including emergency shelters and we own and operate 70 units of affordable and supportive housing. Last year our organization alone served close to 4000 men, women and children in New Haven and Fairfield Counties. All of which were either unstably housed or homeless. For the past 26 years I have worked at New Reach and I have witnessed all aspects of housing instability, homelessness and being a landlord. It's a fairly unique perspective.

It is the mission of New Reach to inspire independence for those affected by homelessness and poverty through a continuum of housing and support using the most innovative and progressive methods.



The importance of safe, affordable, and permanent housing cannot be understated. **Are** we a state that considers a home and roof over head something that only the privileged deserve? I hope not.

When our state's residents have stable housing, their economic and health outcomes improve. Children's health, both physical and mental improve. As do their educational outcomes.

During COVID-19, the need for permanent housing for all of Connecticut's residents has become even more important.

I respectfully request that the committee support the following bills, in order to make our state a better place to live for all:

SB 194

SB 355

SB 875

HB 6528

I would like to focus on one bill with tonight's testimony, SB 194, An act Establishing a Right to Housing.

According to the National Low-Income Housing Coalition, Connecticut lacks almost 87,000 units of housing for low-income residents. That being said, those of us in the housing and homeless sector are trying to address three issues: prevention of people entering the homeless system, quickly moving people out of the homeless system and working have enough housing units for low-income residents.

SB 194 will begin the conversation and the development and expansion of policies and services that will help everyone, landlords and tenants.

I'd like to direct your attention to page 2 of the bill and the 5 paragraphs that define the right to housing;

Para one protects people from housing loss. This is especially important for households who are living in subsidized housing that are in the process of being evicted. Those households will have no choice but to enter the homelessness system. We operate a very successful program in Bridgeport that has prevented eviction through social work, legal support and financial assistance.

The second para refers simply states that those of us who provide rental units, make sure they are healthy and safe.

The third para refers to preserving and developing more affordable housing units.

The 4th para is something that many of us are already doing utilizing federal money to help rapidly exit households from shelter. This program needs to continue and be expanded.

And lastly the fifth para addresses equity. We must make sure that households are not discriminated against because of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, etc.

T hank you to the committee for the opportunity to present this testimony, and for your hard work making



New Reach
269 Peck St
New Haven, CT 06513

P 203.492.4866
F 203.492.4872
newreach.org

important and life-saving decisions during this public health crisis.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.
Kellyann Day, CEO, New Reach

It is the mission of New Reach to inspire independence for those affected by homelessness and poverty through a continuum of housing and support using the most innovative and progressive methods.

