

**Governor's Proposed Budget FY2021-23**  
**Appropriations Hearing**  
**HB 6439 AAC the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023**  
**Department of Housing**  
**Friday, February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

Submitted by:  
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and Program Coordinator at Family Promise of Central CT

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Representative Gibson, Senator Hartley, Representative Kennedy, Senator Somers, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee, thank you for reading my testimony today on House Bill 6439 (AAC the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023). I am submitting this testimony to discuss the important investments through the Department of Housing to support efforts to end homelessness in Connecticut.

I am a Master's of Social Work student at University of Connecticut and I am doing my internship at New Reach, a nonprofit in New Haven. I also am employed at Family Promise of Central CT in New Britain. I have been working in housing and homelessness services for over 13 years. I am a member of the statewide Reaching Home Campaign to prevent and end homelessness in Connecticut. We, alongside many other partners in the state, know that safe, affordable, and permanent housing is the only solution to homelessness. When our state's residents have stable housing, their economic and health outcomes improve. 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 proposals from the Governor's budget for the Department of Housing (DOH).

- We support funding for the DOH Housing and Homelessness Line Item at \$85.5 million.
  - The Governor's budget proposes cutting \$3M from this line reflecting lapses for specific programs. We request that those funds be repurposed for the Rental Assistance Program and/or homeless services.
- We are also in support funding for the DOH Homeless Youth Line Item at \$2.65M in FY 22 and \$2.94M in FY 23

We also support the following additional investments through the DOH.

- We support the addition of \$2.3M in specific funding for Coordinated Access Networks (CANs) to a new line item called 'Homeless Supports' at the DOH.

- Lastly, we support an additional investment of \$2M in DOH's Housing/Homeless Services Line to provide rental assistance to 200 scattered-site supportive housing units.

At Family Promise of Central CT, a small private nonprofit located in New Britain, we coordinate services for children and their families who are experiencing housing instability. Currently we are serving 9 families in our new Homelessness Prevention Program. Each one of the families in the program are unemployed or underemployed and are on the brink of facing eviction. Additionally, the clients served by New Reach's full spectrum of homelessness services, face similar issues. From New Britain to New Haven and everywhere else in the state, there simply are too few resources out there and we as a community literally cannot afford to have any funding cut when it comes to housing and homelessness services. Rental assistance is needed by so many vulnerable families and I urge the legislature to fully fund these programs because otherwise, family homelessness will be an even larger issue than it already is right now.

Since 2012, the number of people utilizing Connecticut's shelter system has decreased by 57%. We must make bold efforts to keep those declines moving so we can end homelessness once and for all. Investing in proven solutions to homelessness is necessary in continuing our progress and ensuring that every youth, family, and individual has a safe, stable place to call home.

Thank you to the committee for the opportunity to present this testimony, and for your hard work making important and life-saving decisions during this public health crisis – it is with your support that we can help make sure Connecticut's residents are healthy and stably housed.

Sincerely,

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