



Testimony to the Housing Committee

February 28, 2017

Regarding

SB 752, An Act Concerning Certain Housing Segregation

Submitted by Mag Morelli, President of LeadingAge Connecticut

[LeadingAge Connecticut](#) is a statewide membership organization of 130 not-for-profit organizations representing the entire field of aging services, including not-for-profit providers of affordable senior housing. Our housing members are sponsored by religious, fraternal, and community organizations that are committed to providing quality housing and services to their residents. We appreciate this opportunity to submit comments on Senate Bill 752, An Act Concerning Certain Housing Segregation.

We commend the proposed establishment of an annually updated list of state and federally subsidized housing in the state and a housing needs assessment by income levels that is contained in this bill. The proposal also recognizes the need to assess the demand for affordable senior housing. A large and rapidly expanding population of low-income older adults faces the dual challenge of finding affordable housing that can also accommodate changing physical and cognitive needs as they grow older. Millions of older adult renters and homeowners face excessive housing costs and an increasing proportion of these older adults experience multiple chronic illnesses as they age. A model of linking affordable senior housing with long term services and supports addresses these dual needs.

LeadingAge Connecticut is a strong proponent of the model of linking affordable senior housing with long term services and supports; a model that enables older adults to remain in the community and to age in place. We believe this model is one of the answers to our state's quest to balance the system of long term services and supports and we are proud of the fact that Connecticut has developed several nationally acclaimed models of senior housing plus services. LeadingAge Connecticut has been advocating for more units to meet the growing needs of our elderly population.

The Need for Additional Units of Affordable Senior Housing

Anecdotally it is clear that we are victims of our own success. The model of providing services and supports within affordable senior housing settings is allowing older adults to age in place and remain in their units much longer than our previous experience. This success however means that fewer units open up and the waiting lists continue to grow. Our members report waiting lists hundreds of names long. We need to invest in building more units of affordable senior housing with rental subsidies.

The data also shows the growing need for affordable senior housing. Our national partner, LeadingAge, last year asked the National Low Income Housing Coalition to run housing need data by state for age 60+ households. The data shows that of the *Extremely Low Income** households in Connecticut with one person 60+ (renters and owners, but not homeless), 80.9% of them – or 66,215 households – are *burdened* by housing costs that are greater than 30% of their income. 65.5% - or 53,611 households – are *severely burdened* with housing costs of more than 50% of their income. And there are thousands more households

in similar situations that are considered very low income or low income. **(Extremely Low-Income Households* are those with household incomes below 30 percent of area median income which in Connecticut in 2016 was \$89,400.)

Connecticut clearly needs more units of affordable senior housing and we encourage the state to seek ways to incentivize the development of such housing. Identifying and quantifying that need is a necessary step in establishing a plan to do so.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony and we look forward to working with the Committee this session.

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