



2009 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

- ***Honor Our Housing Commitments*** - As Connecticut grapples with an economic downturn and a substantial budget deficit, we must more than ever maintain our state's housing commitments. Our most vulnerable residents face even greater pressures in these very difficult times. Further, housing is a critical strategy for our economic recovery. Housing investment yields a unique combination of economic stimulus, job creation and social benefit. Nevertheless, the Rell Administration is already seeking to rescind prior housing commitments (see Community Investment Act and Supportive Housing, below). Budget proposals for the new biennium may bring additional threats. We must defend and expand our commitment to affordable housing.
- ***PILOTs and Tax Abatement Grants*** - The legislature must restore \$3.9 million for Payments-in-Lieu-of-Taxes (PILOTs) for public housing and Tax Abatement Grants for nonprofit housing, cut from the current state budget. Without this funding, many of our state's poorest families will face devastating rent increases. Both the Administration and legislative leadership previously agreed to restore these funds in 2009 - but prompt action is needed.
- ***Preserve State Housing Assets*** - Over 17,700 Connecticut families, seniors and people with disabilities live in housing that was constructed with the help of state financing. This "state housing portfolio" requires over \$500 million in capital improvements - ranging from emergency repairs to full redevelopment in some locations. (In comparison, if we had to develop this housing today, the cost would exceed \$3 billion.) As an immediate step, the \$5 million still remaining in the State-Assisted Housing Sustainability Fund, established in 2007, should be expended for urgent repairs. Going forward, the state must provide sufficient resources for the rehabilitation and revitalization of Connecticut's housing assets, protecting over fifty years of past state investment.
- ***Community Investment Act*** - This highly effective program, established in 2005, directs document recording fees to four important uses: farmland preservation, historic preservation, open space and affordable housing. Governor Rell's proposed Deficit Mitigation Plan would seize \$10 million from these intended purposes. Housing activities supported by this dedicated revenue stream include: the Urban Rehabilitation Homeownership Program (UR Home), gap financing for multi-family housing development, and technical assistance to suburban and rural communities to implement affordable housing initiatives. The Governor's attempt to raid these funds must be rejected.
- ***Supportive Housing*** - The state has suspended funding for an additional 150 units of permanent supportive housing. Under the Next Steps Round III initiative, which had been included in the current state budget, the new proposed housing would serve formerly homeless and at-risk families, veterans and people with disabilities. Nonprofit sponsors have already invested almost \$5 million in these "shovel ready" projects, which will die if state funds are not released.
- ***Housing Program for Economic Growth*** - The HOMEConnecticut statute encourages municipalities to create higher density residential zones with set-asides for affordable housing. Additional appropriations are required for incentives to towns, technical assistance for developers, and project-based rental assistance to serve lower income families.

01/7/09