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1/30/2007      Testimony

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**TO:                    HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE**  
**SUBJECT MATTER:      Appropriations for Nutrition Assistance in CT**

**FROM:                Kate Walton**  
**Programs Director**  
**Connecticut Food Bank**

**RE:    SSNAP (State Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)**

**REQUESTED INCREASE TO FUNDING:            \$2,000,000**

**WHY IS THE STATE PAYING FOR SSNAP FOOD FOR ITS LOW INCOME RESIDENTS AND WHY SHOULD THE FUNDING INCREASE?**

**1.      QUALITY OF LIFE**

**Baseline:**

**Connecticut Food Bank and Foodshare are having increasing demands placed on them as food insecurity continues to plague close to 300,000 CT residents living in poverty. The influx of immigrants, unemployment, soaring housing and insurance costs and lack of access to local food sources shows no sign of abating. **USDA Commodities** and **donated food products** are **not predictable** and are subject to seasonal and other events that affect the market.**

**More predictable food resources that can be planned on and coordinated proactively are needed to close the gap.**

**Result:**

reduction of food insecurity through nutritional continuity  
exponential increase in food resources being accessible to those in need  
food infrastructure established non dependent on commercial interests

**Why is this important?**

Lack of access to nutritional continuity results in poor health and behavior that adversely affects individuals, families and communities.

**CURRENT LEVEL OF SUPPORT 2006/2007****Fund allocation Analysis:**

	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>Poverty Population</b>	<b>Poverty Percentage</b>	<b>% of Total Poverty</b>	<b>SSNAP FOOD ALLOCATION</b>
<b><u>Statewide:</u></b>	<b>3,405,565</b>	<b>259,514</b>	<b>7.62%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>\$ 636,468.00</b>
<b><u>By County - By Poverty Percentage:</u></b>					
<b>1 New Haven</b>	824,008	75,733	9.19%	29.18%	<b>\$ 185,738.08</b>
<b>2 Hartford</b>	857,183	77,440	9.03%	29.84%	<b>\$ 189,924.56</b>
<b>3 Windham</b>	109,091	8,948	8.20%	3.45%	<b>\$ 21,945.31</b>
<b>4 Fairfield</b>	882,567	59,689	6.76%	23.00%	<b>\$ 146,389.55</b>
<b>5 New London</b>	259,088	15,780	6.09%	6.08%	<b>\$ 38,701.05</b>
<b>6 Tolland</b>	136,364	6,952	5.10%	2.68%	<b>\$ 17,050.05</b>
<b>7 Middlesex</b>	155,071	6,911	4.46%	2.66%	<b>\$ 16,949.49</b>
<b>8 Litchfield</b>	182,193	8,061	4.42%	3.11%	<b>\$ 19,769.91</b>
<b>Grand Total:</b>	<b>3,405,565</b>	<b>259,514</b>	<b>7.62%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>\$ 636,468.00</b>
<b><u>By Branch:</u></b>					
<b>1 <u>Foodshare</u></b>					
Hartford	857,183	77,440	7.79%	29.84%	<b>\$ 189,924.56</b>
Tolland	136,364	6,952	0.70%	2.68%	<b>\$ 17,050.05</b>
<b>Total Foodshare:</b>	<b>993,547</b>	<b>84,392</b>	<b>8.49%</b>	<b>32.52%</b>	<b>\$ 206,974.60</b>
<b>2 <u>Connecticut Food Bank</u></b>					
New London	259,088	15,780	9.01%	6.08%	<b>\$ 38,701.05</b>
FB of L Fairfield	307,358	18,755	10.71%	7.23%	<b>\$ 45,997.35</b>
CFB - Windham	109,091	8,948	5.11%	3.45%	<b>\$ 21,945.31</b>
CFB - Waterbury	402,837	29,046	16.59%	11.19%	<b>\$ 71,236.42</b>
CFB - Fairfield	551,586	40,439	23.09%	15.58%	<b>\$ 99,178.19</b>
CFB - East Haven	782,058	62,154	35.49%	23.95%	<b>\$ 152,435.06</b>
<b>Total CFB:</b>	<b>2,412,018</b>	<b>175,122</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>67.48%</b>	<b>\$ 429,493.40</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3,405,565</b>	<b>259,514</b>		<b>100.00%</b>	<b>\$ 636,468.00</b>

**Why increased SSNAP Program funding makes the most sense:**

SSNAP funds administered through Connecticut Food Bank and Foodshare result in immediate, direct access to vital nutrition for CT residents living in poverty.

Disseminating quality food resources through the CT Food Bank and Foodshare network of over 400 providers results in the **mobilization of a vast array of both human and functional resources that would not otherwise be available to the Dept. of Social Services** and would in any case be way too costly for the state to pay for directly.

**Why is this important?**

More than **60% of the feeding programs** utilizing SSNAP food to serve their clients are faith based and **have little or no tax payer supported state funding**. These programs include the majority of emergency food pantries, soup kitchens and transitional supported housing programs that operate in Connecticut communities and that complement and wrap around the 40% of human service programs that are supported with tax payer funds **(which also utilize SSNAP to augment their food budgets)**.

By harnessing the private sector, volunteer and non-government paid human and donated nutritional resources and combining them with the strategic supplemental food supplied through SSNAP, **nutritional continuity is achieved**.

At least 75% of the food donated to prevent massive food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition in Connecticut comes from the largesse and generosity of the private sector and the general public. In the six counties served by CT Food Bank in 2006, about 12,000,000 pounds of donated food was augmented by about 3,000,000 pounds of TEFAP commodities from the federal government and FEMA, and less than 1,000,000 pounds were supplied through the SSNAP program. But the 1,000,000 pounds have huge significance and impact because **it is the only food that can be planned for and selected in advance**.

**How can we measure that SSNAP recipients are better off?**

Donated food, whether USDA commodities, salvaged, or from food drives is "hit or miss" in nature. Too much of one thing, not enough of another is the common theme. SSNAP recipients are better off because **feeding programs can order basic food supplies that are predictable** thereby ensuring that the **core food products they need to prepare or provide nutritious meals are always on hand** - and can then be complimented by donated product and TEFAP as available.

**How can we measure if we are delivering the service well?**

Connecticut Food Bank and Foodshare track every case of SSNAP food going out into the feeding network. We require that **all eligible programs report their output on a monthly basis**. We track and analyze the number of children, adults and seniors being served in each program. We track and analyze the number of meals being provided at each site. We monitor each site for quality assurance, safe food handling and service practices to ensure the proper and equitable distribution of nutritional resources.

**We base the allocation of SSNAP food dollars within counties on the performance of the providers.**

**How are we doing? Baseline indicators.**

**Please review the three major studies conducted by governmental, academic and the private sectors which comprehensively delineate the severity of the problem in CT**

- *Hunger in America 2006 America's Second Harvest The Nations Food Bank Network - Connecticut chapter*
- *Community Food Security in Connecticut A Joint Report by: CT Food Policy Council, University of Connecticut, Hartford Food Systems 09/05*
- *USDA Food Insecurity 2006 report*

Respectfully submitted,

Kate Walton  
Programs Director  
CT FOOD BANK