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SEN. BILL 146

My name is Mark Kosnoff. I am a Meriden resident and a member of United Action, an interfaith based organization from the central part of Connecticut. I would like to give a slightly different perspective on the proceedings today.

I have led a very typical middle income life. I grew up in a middle class environment, went to college for a few years and then found a job. I soon got married and my wife and I had three children. We bought a house and took very modest vacations. Life wasn't easy back then, even on a middle class income. We tried to get by on one paycheck so my wife could stay at home and raise our three children. We basically lived paycheck to paycheck, but I tried hard to take my former bosses advice. He would always say, "work hard, save your money, retire early". Fortunately, I had a good solid middle income job and things did get better when our children started school and my wife was able to start working part time.

Eventually we were able to put our children through college. Now they all have good jobs and are out on their own. Our mortgage is paid off and we were recently able to invest in a second home. Our vacations are now more frequent and nicer. And now, on the verge of retirement, after 35 years of working at the same job I can say that I've nearly fulfilled the American Dream. I'm happily married, have three successful children, own a nice home and will be able to retire at an early age.

But now comes the scary part. Will the income from my pension allow me to live the life I've hoped for when I do retire? Will I be able to maintain my standard of living?

But I have an even more troubling thought. I realize my pension will give me more income than that of a family that would qualify for a State Earned Income Tax Credit. I can't help but wonder if I would ever have been able to achieve the American Dream if I didn't have that middle class income. Would I own a home? Would my children have gone to college? I certainly wouldn't be retiring. I would still be living paycheck to paycheck.

I think, no, I know that we owe working people who are struggling the same opportunities that I had. We need to give them incentive. I was fortunate, we need to assist the unfortunate in helping themselves. A State EITC would give the boost to thousands of families who have the same hopes and dreams that I had and I'm sure everyone on this panel has had.

As a representative of United Action, I ask that you please make the Earned Income Tax Credit a reality. We want to see justice in our communities. By enacting an EITC you will be showing that you agree.