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To: Human Services Committee
February 20, 2007

My name is Elizabeth Rosa. I live in Oakville Ct. I am presently Co-Pastor of Casa del Person Christian Church in Waterbury. I work for the Naugatuck Valley Project also in Waterbury as a community organizer. During the past year I lead 20 focus groups, which were attended by over 200 limited English-speaking people and medical interpretation was the top issue mentioned in all of them.

I think that having the medical reimbursement is a step to better health care. Having effective communication with trained personnel can only happen in our medical facilities, if reimbursement is available.

I came to the United States when I was 10 years old. Learning English was very difficult because there was no bilingual education. It took about two years to feel somewhat comfortable to carry on a conversation. When I did learn to communicate some I found myself translating for my mother at her medical appointments. This was very embarrassing and difficult to do because as a child, there were many medical terms that I did not understand and therefore my mother's health was at risk. This situation occur many times because my mother depended only on me. It was easier for me to miss a day of school then to have a family member take off from work. I remember leaving the Doctor's office scared and wondering if we had effective communication with the Doctor and if she had the right medication for her ailments, We were blessed because we never had a life-threatening situation.

As an adult today I know that it is a dangerous situation to be at, and specifically when someone's health could be at risk. Today there are similar situations happening all over Connecticut where medical translation is in the hands of untrained adults and children. I am passionate about this issue because I like many others, see a tremendous need for effective medical interpretation.

Please support SB 198, Thank You.