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**Testimony of Tracy Helin, Outreach Director,
Connecticut Association for Human Services,
In Opposition to R.B. 1221,
Submitted to the Human Services Committee
February 27, 2007**

My name is Tracy Helin. I am the Outreach Director for the Connecticut Association for Human Services (CAHS). CAHS concentrates on improving overall family economic security in the state. This testimony is submitted to express our strong opposition to Raised Bill Number 1221, An Act Concerning State-funded Food Stamp for Legal Immigrants. For households that are struggling to make ends meet, food stamps play an important role in meeting basic needs and supporting working families.

We appreciate the state-funded supplemental program for recent legal immigrants, which provides food stamp benefits for legal immigrants who would not otherwise qualify for the federal Food Stamp Program. This program provides an important link to nutrition supports for low-income legal immigrant households. Any effort to reduce the funding for this program would have a negative effect far outweighing any savings that would be realized.

While there are not many people enrolled in the State-funded Food Stamp Program, the program represents a relatively small expenditure overall, meaning that this attempt to limit the funding would result in minimal savings. Furthermore, the confusion that has resulted from previous attempts to close this program has caused many public misconceptions about legal immigrant eligibility for the federal Food Stamp Program. Given that the state's lower-income residents receive over \$200 million each year from the federal Food Stamp Program, we feel that the program reductions caused by this bill would cause a ripple effect on the legal immigrant population overall, potentially reducing the number of qualified households who miss out on the federal program as well. In the long run, this would hurt the state.

CAHS urges you to oppose Raised Bill Number 1221, and continue to support the nutritional needs of recent legal immigrants until they become eligible for the federal Food Stamp Program.