



SOUTH PARK INN, INC.

Programs for Homeless Men, Women and Children
Emergency Shelter • Transitional Living • Plimpton House

TO: Human Services Committee

FROM: Brian T. Baker, Assistant Director, South Park Inn, Inc.

DATE: March 13, 2007

SUBJ: Bill Number 1338

I am writing to ask the Human Services Committee to please fully fund the shelters and provide an increase for the Department of Social Services funded homeless shelters. The cost of living increase or COLA which has been granted regularly to other non-profit sponsored by other State Departments has not been found in the DSS budget for homeless shelters. The COLA has been non-effective for hedging our increases in both food and fuel costs. Actually, we received less money from DSS last year than the year before and have relied on donations to make up the difference. In our 85 bed shelter we received over a thousand dollars less between 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 in the state budget. This was also reflected in reduced financing for our transitional program and our permanent supportive housing program called the Plimpton House. Our shelter contracts have not been revised and do not reflect the actual costs of sheltering people and providing case management services. The cost of living increase we were granted in the 2006 legislative session was in actuality a reduction and not an increase. The COLA needs to be fully funded and this 5, 6 or 7% increase should be legislated.

Please be aware our shelters are full and are turning away people everyday. We hope you can find the political will to help the non-profits who are on the front lines of Human Services. The community has responded to the needs of the shelter and lack of any increased aid from DSS. On most nights we will have meal groups preparing and serving dinner, doctors, nurses and medical students providing free health care, Church groups and Synagogues bring in donations of food, hygiene supplies and clothing for our homeless.