



*Written Testimony Before the Energy and Technology Committee  
March 7, 2008*

**H. B. No. 5786** proposes to require that each community action agency start accepting applications no later than September first of each year. The bill also appropriates the sum of \$5.7 million for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009, for weatherization projects for low-income persons participating in the Connecticut energy assistance program.

In both instances, the Governor's budget for fiscal year 2009 includes funds for early start up for the intake of applications and also for providing state funds for weatherization assistance for eligible households. The amount for early start up is \$350,000 and it is DSS' intention to allow for the community action agencies to start accepting applications for the 2008/2009 energy assistance program by mid-August.

The Governor's budget also includes \$1.9 million for weatherization assistance. The weatherization assistance program is a highly technical program and involves specialized training for persons diagnosing and making recommendations on the measures that would be energy efficient and also most cost effective in reducing the households' energy bills. Specialized equipment such as Blower Doors to determine leakage in homes and Bachrach testers to determine the efficiency of a heating system must also be purchased. Finally crews have to be trained or contractors hired to install the recommended measures.

These funds can also be used to cover the costs of measures that the U.S. Department of Energy restricts with their funds or are too cost prohibitive with the limited dollars that are available in the program. Such measures include roof and gutter repairs that might allow water to leak onto insulation should it be installed and the installation of chimneys liners for safety issues.

The weatherization program cannot depend on one-time funding to be successful as it takes funding and time to develop an efficient program. Training staff and purchasing the necessary equipment for a one-year commitment is not a good use of taxpayer dollars.

DSS supports this bill in part. The administration does not believe that the period for early intake has to be set in statute. It also thinks that the appropriation of dollars for

weatherization of the dwellings of low-income persons over a three-year period is more administratively efficient.

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