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**Testimony before the Connecticut General Assembly Human Services Committee
February 21, 2008**

In Support of - "An Act Concerning an Earned Income Tax Credit"

We, Sister Mary Alice Synkewecz, RSM and Sister Linda Pepe, CSJ, the Director and Associate Director of the Collaborative Center for Justice, speaking on behalf of the six congregations of women religious who sponsor our Center, and our membership of approximately 800 Woman Religious and their Associates, raise our voices in support of the State Earned Income Tax Credit bill now before this Committee.

As advocates for justice and equity, we see the increasing disparity between the rich and the poor in Connecticut, as a situation that must be addressed. The State EITC is a way to create equity among taxpayers, especially since the low-wage workers pay a disproportionate amount of their earning on combined sales, property and income taxes. We have heard the opponents of the State EITC bills say "Why should Connecticut give a tax credit to those who do not pay a State income tax?" We suggest to you that a better question to ask and answer is "Why don't the low-wage workers make enough income to pay the State income tax?" Many of these families, whether single parents or married filing jointly, work two or more jobs just to provide for their families, and still they have trouble making ends meet. The State tax credit, when coupled to their Federal EITC, adds additional income to be spent in local cities and towns.

A State EITC rewards the low-wage worker who goes to work every day with the full realization that wages paid are not enough to make ends meet for his or her family. Should these workers not be rewarded for their persistence in the job? We think a reward is appropriate and possible.

From a purely pragmatic point of view, a State EITC would enable families to pay bills, stimulate the local economy, increases workforce participation, and above all, reduces child poverty. In addition to almost \$275 million received in Connecticut by the Federal EITC grant, an additional \$59 million could be infused into the local economies. Which of these results would the opponents of the State EITC find objectionable?

We encourage the members of the Human Services Committee to support this Bill, and allow it to pass to the House and Senate for debate, and HOPEFULLY, passage this session. If not now, then WHEN will we pass legislation that creates equity and rewards the low-wage worker in Connecticut? A State EITC is the first step to achieving a Connecticut where economic self-sufficiency can be enjoyed by all families.