

Good morning, Honorable Senator Harris, Representative Villano, and the members of the Human Services Committee.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to explain why a state Earned Income Tax Credit would be a tremendous gain for Hartford.

As long time Hartford residents, as well as Hartford City Councilors, it is clear that too many families in Hartford are having a tough time making ends meet.

Everyday, you can read about it in the papers: Energy costs are up. Adjustable mortgages rates are driving housing costs up. Healthcare costs are going way up. Meanwhile, wages are stagnating.

Many families in Hartford are hit hard by the facts behind these headlines every day. And a state Earned Income Tax Credit is designed to help out those who are hit hardest by these crises.

People who work hard shouldn't have to be on the brink of slipping into poverty. But this is the case for too many Hartford families. A state Earned Income Tax Credit would provide a much-needed leg up for Hartford's working poor. It is an efficient mechanism to restore some economic security to the most vulnerable.

According to 2004 data, Hartford residents could have received an extra \$5.5 million back on their tax returns with a state Earned Income Tax Credit. An extra \$5 million for Hartford residents wouldn't immediately fix all of our city's problems, but it would certainly be a step in the right direction.

A state EITC would also help local businesses in Hartford. Since the working poor spend most of their money locally, that would mean extra money getting infused into local businesses.

The federal Earned Income Tax Credit is one of the most successful anti-poverty programs in our nation's history. Twenty other states, including every state in New England with an income tax, have a state EITC. We have an opportunity this year to give low-wage workers in Connecticut a hand up out of poverty as well this year.

For the sake of tens of thousands of Hartford residents, and the working poor across the state, we urge you to adopt this common sense and effective anti-poverty measure.

Thank you.

Larry Deutsch Deutsch
Minority Leader, Hartford City Council
Working Families Party

Luis Cotto
Hartford City Council
Working Families Party