

# COVENANT SOUP KITCHEN

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WILLIMANTIC, CONNECTICUT 06226

423-1643

February 25, 2008

State of Connecticut  
Connecticut General Assembly  
Human Services Committee  
Room 2000, Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106  
Attn: Jonathon A. Harris, Co-Chair  
Peter F. Villano, Co-Chair

Ref: Raised Bill No. 415 - LCO # 693

Subject: **Section 1.** Increased funding to Department of Social Service for the SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program).  
**Section 2.** Appropriation to the Department of Social services for the purpose of providing grants to the Connecticut Food Bank and Foodshare to distribute to emergency food sites and community food sites to increase their capacity to hold and serve food to their clients.

Dear Senator Harris and Representative Villano

As one of the recipient agencies of both the SNAP (Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program) and assistance from Connecticut Food Bank I am writing you to urge your support of the above referenced Bill #415.

We are non-profit agencies serving the greater Willimantic/Windham Region operating both a Meals Program and Emergency Food Pantry. We have been in operation for 27 years, since 1981. I have been Executive Director of the organization for the past seven years and I can tell you that in just my tenure here the numbers of people we have served has increase by over 50%. My first year here, we served approximately 80,000 meals in both programs and this past fiscal year 2007-2008 our numbers were approximately 120,000 meals. In our current fiscal year numbers have exceed 10,000 meals each month with January bringing our highest numbers on record of 11,987 meals. We expect our fiscal year totals to close in on 125,000 to 130,000.



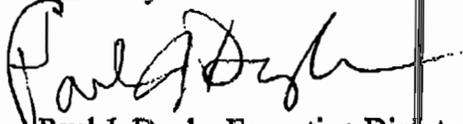
The increase in funding for SNAP (Section 1) which provides food for our agency is crucial to our being able to deal with these continuing increases. The food products we receive as part of the program are essential to what we are able to provide to our clients. The clients we serve come from all walks of life in our community, many are working, but are suffering from severe underemployment and count on our programs to make ends meet nutritionally for themselves and their families.

The increase funding in the form of grants to Connecticut Food Bank and Foodshare (Section 2) will be a great help to us also in allowing us to increase our agencies capacities. As you can imagine, the increase in numbers has put a severe strain on our storage capacity, both of dry goods, and food needing to be refrigerated or frozen. Our pantries and refrigerators and freezers no longer serve adequately to maintain the volume of food needed to keep up with demand. We need to dramatically increase our storage capacity.

Also, currently all client information is recorded by hand and with our increased volumes this has become very time consuming and cumbersome. It is imperative that we update our information technology to be able to record all information on computer and facilitate not only the expediency and efficiency of our process, but the safety and security of client information as well.

For these, and so many other reasons, too numerous to mention in this short letter, I urge you to support Bill #415 for approval and to urge your colleagues to do so as well. Should you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me. I would invite you and members of your committee to check in with agencies like ours in the areas that you represent, as I am sure our overwhelming increases are not isolated to our agency or region. Please know you are all welcome to visit our facility at any time should you wish to do so, and see firsthand our organizations operations.

Sincerely Yours



Paul J. Doyle, Executive Director.

cc: On File

Representative Walter Pawelkiewicz, House District 49  
Senator Donald Williams, Senate District #29