



Testimony of: Carol Walter  
To: Human Services Committee  
February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2008

Senator Harris, Representative Villano, and Distinguished Members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is Carol Walter, and I am the Executive Director of the Coalition to End Homelessness. I am here today to testify in **support of SB 416: An Act Eliminating the Fee for ID cards and the Appropriation of Funds for the Prevention of Homelessness.**

On any given day, over 4,100 people experience homelessness in our state.<sup>1</sup> For far too many, the lack of a proper form of photo identification is a barrier to receiving vital services, and obtaining both employment and housing. According to a study by the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (NLCHP), homeless persons were denied the following services when they lacked a photo ID:

**54% were denied access to shelters or housing services**  
**45% were denied access to Medicaid or medical services**  
**31% were denied Temporary Aid to Needy Families**

If Connecticut waives the fee for homeless individuals to obtain a photo ID from the DMV, we would be joining several other states that have also removed this barrier for individuals facing homelessness. Nevada, North Carolina, Oregon, Illinois and South Carolina have already instituted such a waiver. In the case of North Carolina, the waiver for the homeless has been state law since 1993. Since that time, they have issued just over 20,000 ID's resulting in enhanced access to housing and services for thousands of homeless individuals and families. According to the North Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles, the lost revenue that results from this each year is a mere \$13,600. Based on that information, it is expected that the lost revenue for Connecticut each year would be only \$20,000.

Additionally, SB 416 would allocate \$800,000 in additional funding to the the Eviction and Foreclosure Prevention Program (EFPP). Each year, EFPP runs out of funding at 6 months before it can reach the hundreds of families that are in need of this one time assistance to prevent them from becoming homeless. EFPP assists low and moderate income residents who are at risk of homelessness due to an inability to pay their back rent or past due mortgage. The program attempts to prevent litigation, eviction, or foreclosure through assessment, mediation, conflict resolution, and the use of a rent bank. The average rent bank payment is \$800- just \$800 in a one time payment to prevent a family and an individual from becoming homeless. In 2007, nearly 1000 individuals and families were prevented from becoming homeless due to intervention and mediation from EFPP, and with the additional funding from SB 416, that number will increase substantially.

<sup>1</sup> Center for Urban and Community Studies, "CT Counts 2007: Annual Point-in-Time Count," May, 2007.



## Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness

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By passing SB 416, Connecticut will ensure that we remove one key barrier to independence for individuals who are homeless, and that we ensure families that are at risk of becoming homeless are prevented from ever having to experience it.

Thank you for your time today. I'd be happy to take any questions that you all may have.