



Human Services Committee

March 11, 2008

Good Morning Senator Harris, Representative Villano and members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Rhonda Evans and I am the Deputy Director of the CT Association for Community Action, the state association for CT's 12 federally designated anti-poverty Community Action Agencies. First, I want to congratulate the Committee and the Child Poverty and Prevention Council on bringing this important matter to the committee for a hearing and for action. As you know, low and middle income families are struggling to make ends meet and CT's Community Action Network is working hard to provide the assistance and support they need.

I am here today to provide our support for the following bills:

S.B. No. 666 (RAISED) An Act Concerning the Reduction of Child Poverty

S.B. No. 660 (Raised) An Act Concerning Establishment of A Food Stamp Employment and Training Program and Fund.

H.B. No. 5907 (RAISED) An Act Concerning the Temporary Family Assistance Program

I do not want to get into the details of these bills, and while many say, the devil is in the details, we will leave those details up to the wisdom of the

Committee, the Commission on Children, the Office of Policy and Management, and all the different agencies and levels of government mentioned in these bills to make sure the right thing is done for low-income and working poor families and children and that communities across the state are engaged as broadly as possible

My main point here today is to congratulate you again for bringing these critical issues up for action. We are leaders in the country with our state policy to reduce child poverty by 50% by 2014 and other states and communities across the country are looking to us to provide policies and strategies to make this happen.

I want you to know that we are willing and ready to work with you. Communities all over the state are ready—today—to engage around the child poverty agenda and they should all be invited to participate by the state. Time is of the essence in gaining community support if we are to meet our child poverty reduction target by the year 2014. All communities need the state's support, so that we can create a state-wide learning community and share what does and does not work. Communities can be engaged best by a wide-open invitation, not a competition.

Again, thank you for your very important work. We look forward to working with you to help CT's struggling families and to meet the goal of reducing child and family poverty.