



**THAMES VALLEY COUNCIL FOR COMMUNITY ACTION, INC.**  
**Serving Our Communities Since 1965**

Deborah Monahan, Executive Director

Senator Handley, Representative Sayers and Members of the Public Health Committee:

Re: SB 574, AAC THE FEDERAL SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD PROGRAM  
FOR WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN.

Good Afternoon. My name is Marylou Underwood. I am the Chief Operations Officer at the Thames Valley Council for Community Action in Southeastern Connecticut. I am here today to speak in support of Senate Bill 574: An Act Concerning the Federal Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children. The WIC program has a long standing history and is nationally recognized as a premier public health nutrition program. WIC is cost effective, and a sound investment in insuring the health of over 8.5 million mothers, infants and children.

TVCCA has been a provider of the WIC program for the past thirty-three (33) years. Our agency has seen the benefits first hand of this program.

The centerpiece of the WIC program is the nutrition education sessions that the WIC mothers and children receive. This includes nutrition assessment, counseling and education, overweight and obesity prevention, breastfeeding support and promotion, prenatal and pediatric healthcare referrals, immunizations and screening, family assessment and if necessary referral to other services.

However, over the past years the funding necessary to adequately support local programs has seriously lagged behind.

That is why SB 574 is so important. Connecticut must recognize that local programs NEED additional monies to ensure that rising costs of providing services are addressed.

Over the past three years TVCCA has had to commit significant agency resources to the program to pay for rent, telephones, consumable supplies, and other non personnel costs since our previous contract paid basically for personnel only.

If the agency had not **committed** these fiscal resources the program services available to the mothers and children of New London County would have been significantly limited. TVCCA does not have the resources available to continue to support at the level we had been. Given the economic situation we face in our state now, it is not the time for the WIC local provider(s) to have limited staffing, location availability and monies to operate.

More than ever before, the mothers, infants and children of the State of Connecticut are depending on the local WIC provider.

On behalf of TVCCA I would like to request of the Public Health Committee to ensure that the \$500,000 allocated in this bill be funded and used to support and enhance **local** provider operations. "We need to keep the lights on"

Thank you.