



Middlesex Coalition For Children

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ORAL TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF S.B. No.163 (RAISED), An Act concerning a STATE EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT

Our time is short this morning, so I am going to assume that you know that the Earned Income Tax Credit is a sure-fire, time-tested way to stimulate the economy, to reward hard-working low-income families and to make the tax system more equitable. I will also assume that you are familiar with the tremendous bipartisan support which the initial Federal EITC legislation garnered under a Republican presidency and the bipartisan efforts which have seen similar EITC legislation enacted since that time in 22 states.

Instead I want to focus on what a Connecticut EITC would mean to my part of this state – to Middlesex County.

Look at Middletown. According to 2004 data compiled by *CT Voices for Children*, just over 10% of Middletown residents who filed federal income tax returns also filed for Federal EITC. If there were a 20% CT EITC piggy-backing on the federal program, these families would receive \$305, on average.

When I talk to people in Middletown about a CT EITC and about this potential \$305, this is what I hear:

“I could make a deposit on an apartment,” said a cafeteria worker.

“I could use that money to repair my car and replace my bald tires,” said a fast food restaurant employee.

“Maybe I could find a used washer and dryer so I wouldn’t have to lug all our clothes to the laundromat,” from a tired mom.

When you live from paycheck to paycheck, a CT EITC could have a real impact.

To many people, \$305 might not seem like a lot of money. But if the main bread-winner in your family makes the minimum wage - \$7.65 per hour – and works 40 hours per week for a full 52 weeks per year, that person would earn just under \$16,000 per year. That’s certainly not much money to care for a family, even a small family of two or three.

Now look at Middlesex County – according to that same 2004 data, a CT EITC would benefit 5,229 families living in Middlesex County – families who already apply for the Federal EITC. It would put a total of almost 2 million dollars in their pockets, ready to pump into the local economy. And with 2, 3 or 4 people in each of those 5,229 families, that would be 10,000 – 20,000 children and adults IN MIDDLESEX COUNTY alone who would benefit from a CT EITC.

Imagine those numbers magnified across the state.

I urge you – this session - to reach across the aisle and into the governor’s mansion to enact this important legislation.

Margaret H. Rich
For the Legislative Advocacy Committee
Middlesex Coalition for Children

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