

February 25, 2007

Human Services Committee
Co-Chair Jonathan A. Harris
Co-Chair Peter F. Villano
State of CT General Assembly
February Session, 2008

Re: Raised Bill No. 415

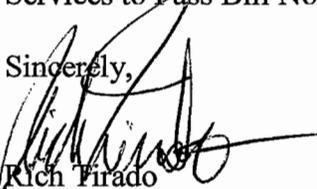
My name is Rich Tirado. I am Programs Resource Coordinator for the Fairfield Branch of CT Food Bank (CFB). My job is to maximize how our member programs utilize the CFB as well as ensuring that they follow CFB guidelines. In my day-to-day interactions with the member programs I have seen first hand how the lack of funding sources delay and limit our member programs' ability to respond to the growing need of food security in the Fairfield Area, particularly in regards to Bridgeport.

One such member program is located on the West End Neighborhood of Bridgeport. This program provides a unique service by serving lunch every Saturday, when most school lunch programs are closed. Though they provide a crucial service, the member program is at risk of closing due to an outdated kitchen. The stove the kitchen uses is over forty years old and many of its parts need replacing but have long been discontinued and cannot be replaced. Aside from the stove, the member program will also need to update it's entire kitchen to meet Health Dept. requirements as well as certifying staff in food safety handling.

Another member program that comes to mind is located on Main St. in Bridgeport. This program has both a Soup Kitchen as well as a food pantry. Even though they have purchased a huge facility (former play house) they now lack the funds to update the kitchen to Health Dept. requirements and expand their food pantry. The pace of their improvements has been sluggish at best.

I could go on all day about member programs that need financial assistance to go from being compliant to setting the bar for service and outreach. However, without increasing our member programs capacities to handle and serve food to their clients we cannot achieve this goal. That why I implore the Co-Chairs of the Committee on Human Services to Pass Bill No. 415. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Rich Tirado

Programs Resource Coordinator
CFB Fairfield Branch
(203) 868 4516 cell