



END HUNGER CONNECTICUT! Inc.

102 HUNGERFORD STREET, HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-4626 ☎ PHONE: 860 560-2100 ☎ FAX: 860 560-2108

Testimony in support of SB 660: An Act Concerning the Establishment of a Food Stamp Employment and Training Program and Fund and SB 666, An Act Concerning the Reduction of Child Poverty.

Lucy Nolan, Executive Director, End Hunger Connecticut!
March 11, 2008

Good Day, Senator Harris, Representative Villano and members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Lucy Nolan and I am the Executive Director of End Hunger Connecticut!, a statewide anti-hunger and food security organization. I am here today to speak in favor of SB 660: An Act Concerning Establishment of a Food Stamp Employment and Training Program and Fund and SB 660, An Act Concerning the Reduction of Child Poverty.

End Hunger Connecticut! has four Food Stamp Outreach workers in the state. Two for Hartford and Tolland County, one in north eastern Connecticut and one in south eastern Connecticut. We see, on a daily basis, food stamp participants who could use the services offered with the USDA funded Food Stamp Employment and Training program. Given that this is a hugely untapped source of funds, as the program is an entitlement program, it makes sense to create a policy to better utilize it. Not only would this help low-income people be better prepared for employment, the FSET program also brings in much needed federal dollars.

We know that if there were better supports for Food Stamp participants to engage in work, they would. As it is run now, the FSET program is not as inclusive as this legislation. It is my understanding that the FSET program can help with childcare, with housing and transportation needs, and even some medical issues – as long as they are necessary to train for employment.

In Section 1 (b) it is our belief that the fund would be better served if it were done in a straight match. Setting up a non-lapsing fund may incur more problems than necessary. As the program is funded a 50/50 match is necessary to procure the federal money, which is reimbursed. All kinds of funding streams can be used to meet the match, from foundation funds, state education funds, and local allocations from towns and from the state. It is my opinion that the match can be found by the program officer for the education and training program. It is not a difficult task, and many organizations do this for Food Stamp outreach and the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program. Given the inconsistency in the budget on any given year, it makes more sense to keep the line out of the General Fund.

In SB 666, An Act Concerning the Reduction of Child Poverty, Sections 3 and 4 specifically speak to Food Stamp on-line applications. We wholeheartedly support this, and have worked with the DSS on this very program. End Hunger Connecticut! has a prescreener tool that has been endorsed by the

Department of Social Services. In fact it is already on DSS's food stamps page on the web site. Perhaps they can make it more visible and add the link on the front page with the other items on the right hand side. The prescreener that DSS has the link for, and is operated by End Hunger Connecticut! can be found at www.ctfoodstamps.org.

We are able to use the program in our office, or while we are out in the field. All of our outreach workers have laptop computers that they use to see if clients are eligible. Other organizations use our prescreener in their offices as well, including many food pantries, soup kitchens, health centers, legal aid and 2-1-1. It is a very valuable and used tool. It allows people to see if they are eligible for food stamps, and if so, they are then given a comprehensive list of materials that they need to bring with them, helping move the process along. It is our belief that a web-based application would be more efficient as the intake workers can look at the application and make an appointment with the client to come at a specific time and bring specific documents. In some states, they have a dedicated staff person for this very purpose. I suggest we do the same in each DSS office. Additionally, it is important that there be adequate funds for both the on-line application, but also the administrative portion of the program. There will still be the need for clients to come to the DSS office to meet with an intake worker to assure that all the proper paperwork and income limits are being adhered too. It is very important that this remains a consideration for the funding of the online piece. There should be more applications than there are now.

Both of these bills are on the way to increasing food stamp use, and increasing a family's self-sufficiency. Additional employment and training will move families and individuals farther on that road. We support the concepts as outlined here in SB 660 and SB 666 and invite you to go online at www.ctfoodstamps.org for further information on the food stamp prescreener to assess eligibility to the Food Stamp Program.

Thank you.



END HUNGER CONNECTICUT!

Welcome to Food @ Your Fingertips

- ▣ Frequently Asked Questions about the Food Stamp Program
- ▣ Click here to find out if you are eligible for food stamps
- ▣ Click here for the nearest DSS Office
- ▣ Contact Us
- ▣ Food Stamp Application
- ▣ Search

[English](#) :: [Español](#) ::  [Printer Friendly](#)



Life can be hard. Getting food should be easy!

Over 20 million people in the United States are getting help from the Food Stamp Program each month. Even if you own a home and a car or are working, you may be able to get food stamps.

End Hunger Connecticut!, an anti-hunger organization, designed this website to help people in Connecticut get food stamps.

[Click here to find out if you are eligible for Food Stamps.](#)

You can use the boxes on the screen to find out more information about the Food Stamp Program. There are words that have special meanings for the Food Stamp Program, like "household". If you see a word in blue text on this web site, click on it with your mouse to find out what it means.

Credits: Project Bread, USDA, FRAC

To Contact Us:
Phone: (860) 560-2100
Fax: (860) 560-2108
Email: endhungerct@endhungerct.org