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In opposition to **RB 6442, An Act Concerning Work Activities Permitted in the Jobs-First Employment Services Program**

Good morning, Senator Doyle, Representative Walker 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 advocacy, education and outreach organization. I am here today to speak in opposition to RB 6442, An Act Concerning Work Activities Permitted in the Jobs First Employment Services Program.

In particular, I would like to comment on Section (c) of the legislation:

(c) Notwithstanding any provision of the general statutes and to the extent permitted by federal law, the temporary family assistance and **supplemental nutrition assistance program** benefits paid to a program participant and used to calculate the number of hours of participation in unsubsidized work experience shall be considered a wage, as defined in section 31-58. (Bold added by testifier)

We believe that aligning the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formally known as Food Stamps) benefits with Temporary Family Assistance and requiring the benefits to be considered as wages in order for the beneficiaries to participate in a Work Force Program is a direct contradiction to the desires of the USDA, the agency that administers SNAP. The name of the program was changed to SNAP in order to take away the stigma that it held as a welfare program and to emphasize the nutritional benefits of the program. SNAP benefits are nutrition benefits and the program is very specifically seen as a short term benefit to help families, and others, get through difficult times.

SNAP, or food benefits, should in no way be considered wages for unsubsidized work. The benefits can only be used for food, and not for any other reason. It is unreasonable to expect someone to be paid only with food, and equally unreasonable to expect someone who is otherwise eligible for this federally funded program to have to work for the benefit.

End Hunger Connecticut! is opposed to the passage of RB 6442.

Thank you.