

**Testimony of Rose Alma Senatore, Chief Executive Officer**  
Catholic Charities—Archdiocese of Hartford  
December 9, 2009

Good afternoon. My name is Rose Alma Senatore, and I am the Chief Executive Officer of Catholic Charities, the Archdiocese of Hartford. Catholic Charities has a history of more than 90 years of providing social services to individuals throughout their lives, from early childhood through older adulthood. The array of services offered includes adoption, early childhood education, behavioral health services to adults and children, court support services, employment support, basic human needs, resettlement services, residential services to the developmentally disabled, and elder services. Catholic Charities works in partnership with all State agencies, many of which are affected by the proposed cuts, totaling over \$1,000,000 for Catholic Charities alone.

I am here today to share with you the impact of the Governor's Deficit Mitigation Plan, including the rescissions already implemented and those that are proposed. Simply stated, they will negatively affect over 1,100 clients currently receiving services in the communities we serve, including Hartford, New Haven and Waterbury. The key programs impacted include Nurturing Families, Safety Net, Substance Abuse, the Family Support Team, the Child Guidance Clinic, Juvenile Justice Services, Family Violence and Family Preservation. The funding cuts would also increase unemployment in Connecticut, as we would be forced to decrease our staffing still further in order to address these further rescissions.

Without these services, at-risk mothers and their babies will lack the resources necessary to keep them together. Single parents will be unable to overcome barriers to employment and child care, leading to an increase in poverty. At-risk youth will not have community-based programs readily available to them, thus fostering poor choices on their part and a return to institutional or jail settings. Latino youth and their families will not have competent and accessible mental health services, and over 600 individuals with serious mental health issues, lacking the health insurance or financial resources to pay for services, will find themselves without care or using more costly, higher levels of care.

The issues and challenges that our clients face will not disappear. Where will they go? Inevitably, the proposed cuts will wind up costing the State more in the end. Additional stress will be placed on current systems with individuals compelled to use inappropriate levels of care such as crisis intervention, emergency room, and in-patient stays for treatment previously provided in less intensive settings.

Catholic Charities, along with many other nonprofit social service agencies, has already experienced and absorbed a significant share of the pain of the State's budget cuts. Also, our contributions from the United Way, private foundations and donations have significantly been reduced. Continuing to deplete the resources available to those who are most vulnerable will ultimately result in higher costs to the State, increased unemployment, and higher levels of poverty. For these reasons, we ask that you continue to advocate for the needs of private providers such as Catholic Charities, enabling us to continue to support the individuals and the communities in which we live.