

**Testimony before the State of Connecticut Appropriations Committee
Public Hearing, February 18, 2009
Gwendolyn Eaddy-Samuel –Meriden CT**

Good evening, Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian and esteemed members of the Appropriations Committee.

Connecticut will need to stop the opening of the Flood gates of Poverty during this recession!! This includes, hunger, homelessness, abuse & neglect, unemployment, uninsured...

My name is Gwen Eaddy-Samuel, and I live in Meriden, Connecticut. I am parent leader & community advocate for children and families based on personal experiences, past employment and my commitment to create a better CT that provides my children with equal access to a quality education and/or alternative pathways to be gainfully employed if they do not chose college.

I am the mother of four, 19 years of age, so I support workforce development trainings for youth to teach life skills , job training and placement because if I don't teach him how to be a productive citizen in life, then others, with not so good intentions will offer him "job opportunities which could land him in jail. I have an 18 year old in Job Corp and a 10 year old and 7 year old in elementary school. As a result, **I am a strong supporter of PREVENTIVE, EARLY INTERVENTION types of programs and initiatives that keep kids safe, teach conflict resolution, and parent supports that keep families safe, healthy and intact. I work toward making Social services of CT an Accountable, results based, community based and family centered systems.**

* I am respectfully asking that the Appropriations Committee leave the Commission on Children in tact.

The COC has supported the direction of result based initiatives in the area of school readiness, early reading, child poverty reduction, bullying, after-school programs,

They encourage and promote the usage of federal funds at its max, lead abatement which is key for older housing in CT communities, toy safety, parent leadership (PLTI, PSEE...), child nutrition, and obesity reduction.

Parent Leadership Training is a clear preventive strategy that teaches parents how to effectively advocate for their children. "When parents/family know BETTER they can Do BETTER".

In regards to DSS, they are presently in an Audit to look at the \$5.3 billion Department of Social Services financial picture. That is a big picture!!

Lets not be so hasty to fund this deficit at the expense of the poor and newly POOR!!

Let's review the Audit and hopefully find some cost saving recommendations.

The Child Care Subsidy program Care 4 Kids allows for working poor families parents to work and bring their children into quality child care settings. Stable lifestyles in children promote healthy life styles in children.

DSS has spent money on current Markey Rates of over \$60,000 w/out using the current rates in the federal report. 2005 was the most current Rate from UCONN, the contractor to do the Market Rates Survey.

I would encourage the state to monitor the DSS Child Care Development Block Grant two year plan that ends in 9-30-09.

TANF should be used for what it was intended for... TEMPORARY assistance for needy Families. We need to focus on job training and displaced workers and tying this more intentionally w/ DCF. We need to help change habits and make WORKING a good thing that leads toward self-sufficiency.

Look to MAXIMIZE the FEDERAL Dollars coming into CT.

What we do now as a state will influence the quality of life in the years to come in the future of CT's children and most vulnerable populations!!!!.