

December 9, 2009



WOMEN & FAMILIES CENTER

Serving Connecticut families for over 100 years

Senator Toni N. Harp, Co-Chair
Rep. John C. Geragosian, Co-Chair
Appropriations Committee
Connecticut General Assembly

Dear Senator Harp, Rep. Geragosian and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony concerning funding for the Commission on Children. The Women and Families Center is a multifaceted human service organization that has served South Central Connecticut for over 100 years. The Center's mission is to eliminate injustice and improve the quality of life for women and families through services that foster empowerment and independence.

The Governor's current deficit mitigation plan will eliminate The Commission on Children. This would "save" the State approximately \$200,000; but it would cost the State far more. The Commission actively works to find untapped federal funding sources and bring federal dollars to our state. One example with which we are familiar is SNAP E&T. Without the support from the Commission on Children, it would have been highly unlikely that the Meriden Collaborative would have submitted an application for the SNAP E&T program.

Given the current recession and state budget difficulties, SNAP E&T is particularly important. Through SNAP E&T approximately \$9.25 million of federal money will come back to Connecticut. The Meriden-Middletown-Wallingford SNAP E&T is estimating \$576,000 in reimbursed federal funds for Year 1, and expecting this amount to regularly increase. This funding will allow the participating towns to continue to provide vital programming to adult learners. The Commission on Children was critical in the application process and was responsible for the following:

- Locating this federal funding stream (SNAP E&T).
- Engaging national experts on these funds to train both the Executive and Legislative branches on the opportunity.
- Assisting in drafting legislation (PA 08-161) to maximize use of the funds and to detail how the reimbursement dollars should be utilized.
- Informing strategic partners of the SNAP E&T opportunity and facilitating a collaborative application.
- The Commission facilitated the applications of 90 towns totaling 14 collaborative applications.

We urge you to continue to fund the Commission on Children. The Commission provides Connecticut a solid return on investment.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael V Buccilli, MSW
Director of Employment and Training

Robyn-Jay Bage, M.P.A.
Chief Executive Officer

CC: Speaker of the House Christopher Donovan
Senator Thomas Gaffey

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