

# The Connecticut General Assembly

House Democrats



Children's Committee PUBLIC HEARING  
Thursday, March 6, 2010

Speaker Christopher Donovan's Testimony in SUPPORT of

House Bill No. 5360 (Raised) AN ACT CONCERNING CHILDREN IN THE RECESSION.

Representative Urban, Senator Musto and members of the committee:

I wish to express my strong support for **House Bill No. 5360 (Raised)**, An Act Concerning Children in the Recession. As you know this bill was created out of the recommendations of the Taskforce on Children in the Recession that has been meeting and listening around the state to the public on how this recession is affecting their children and families. This bill has been created to propose a comprehensive approach to assist children and families throughout the state who are middle class and lower income; urban, suburban and rural. It is important to note that many of the specifics in this bill are only triggered during times of an economic recession which is indicated by at least an 8% state unemployment rate. This proposal is not mandating or implementing permanent social programs or changes. It is creating temporary relief while our families work to get back on their feet.

When times are difficult and people are suffering, government must step up and assist them, not cut and run. What else is the purpose of government if not to help people in the times they need it most?

This bill implements several important and urgent government responses whenever our state may be in a recession such as 1) improving service delivery so the families eligible for services can receive them in an efficient and timely manner, 2) helping people get back to work by providing vital child care, and 3) making sure tragedies such as increasing rates of infant mortality due to low birth weights are diminished.

Most importantly, the programs in this bill are created with the sensitivity to the state budget when a recession is upon us. The bill requires the maximizing of federal funds, coordination across federal and state agencies, and partnering when possible with philanthropy and others in the private sector. The bill creates an emergency leadership team to ensure that government is working as efficiently as possible to implement assistance programs during this recession. It utilizes results based accountability policy to make sure what we do works.

The evidence suggests that children will feel the impact of the economic crisis far into the future. They are our future, and we must do everything we can to protect them from the ravages of this recession or any other down the road.

I would like to thank this committee for raising this comprehensive and much needed bill. I thank the committee for their time and consideration on this matter.