



Statement of Ariel Martinez; Executive Director - New Life Corporation  
Appropriations Committee Public Hearing on the Governor's March 1 Deficit Mitigation Plan  
March 11, 2010

Sen. Harp, Rep. and members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Ariel Martinez. I am Executive Director of New Life Corporation a faith-based non-profit located in New Haven Connecticut. The purpose of New Life Corporation is to build the financial economic security of low-income individuals/families in the Greater New Haven region through services in workforce development, financial education, and asset-building.

I want to offer the following comments on Governor Rell's March 1<sup>st</sup> Deficit Mitigation Plan to balance the state's budget. As an organization who receives state funding in order to serve thousands of no-income and low-income people, we understand first hand why such funding cuts will negatively impact the residents who live in the poorest of our cities serviced by organizations like ours working hard to assist them every day.

This mitigation plan is of grave concern to organizations like New Life because while we provide services for all groups of people from all background, we also serve a growing Hispanic population where almost 60% of our clients are Hispanic residents. Over 80% are low-income while others have no income and are searching for jobs. Over the past six years we have provided services to over 10,000 people and through our Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program have assisted them in accessing over \$21.8 million dollars in Federal income tax refunds and Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC).

We are also the only Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Certified Individual Tax Identification Number (ITIN) Acceptance Agent within 80 miles from New Haven. We assist undocumented low-income workers in processing and obtaining an ITIN number which permits them to legally file their income tax returns to the IRS. Within this program, over 97% of our clients are Hispanic others include Canadian, Asian, etc.

Typical of other small non-profits around the state, one would think that we are a large organization, but in truth we have only five staff. The reason we are able to service such a large number of people is through the collaboration and hard work of over 50 volunteers which we recruit, train, certify and manage on a yearly bases. In the past six years, we've worked with over 450 volunteers.

That said, the proposed deficit Mitigation Plan in any good economy, in today's economy it would be its negative effect will not resound around the state and will not only hurt our organizations but have collateral damage hurting the most needy of families in a time when there are no jobs and limited resources to help them. Allowing kind of additional cuts to the non-profit service industry is not only a dishonest representation of spending priorities, it is utterly immoral. This proposed reduction will result in a state-wide decrease of vitally needed services to the neediest of families and in some cases the total elimination of Hispanic servicing agencies such as New Life who are uniquely qualified to assist this population and are additionally strategically located in communities where many larger organizations are unable to access them.

It is for this reason that I respectfully ask that you oppose Governor Rell's March 1<sup>st</sup> Deficit Mitigation Plan to the fullest of your legislative power. I want to thank you for the opportunity to express my opinion and your willingness to have serious deliberation on this topic.

Respectfully Submitted:  
Ariel Martinez; Executive Director