

**Senator Toni Nathaniel Harp, Co-Chair**  
**Representative John C. Geragosian, Co-Chair**  
**Members of the Appropriations Committee**

**March 11, 2010, Testimony regarding Governor's Budget Mitigation Plan:  
Nurturing Families**

Good Afternoon!

My name is Wayne L., and I am here today not on my own behalf, nor the Children's Trust Fund or Catholic Charities Nurturing Network Program, but on behalf of the voices that cannot be heard today. These are the voices of children who want nothing more than to be nurtured by their parents but even in this day and age have to endure abuses, neglect and in the worst cases, death. These situations can all be helped to some degrees. What these parents lacked is the education and knowledge of how to nurture a child.

There is also a huge misconception of what disciplining a child actually means. Due to the lack of education, most parents consider the act of disciplining their child as some sort of punishment for a child not listening or not obeying a rule. This is where the problem lies. Disciplining a child not only means correcting a child's mistake, but also showing a child what is right or giving a child praise when a task is done to the best of that child's ability. This is what discipline is all about. This very important fact is explained to parents through the Nurturing families Network Home Visiting and Nurturing Parenting Groups. You've heard me refer to the word "education: several times because that is the underlying issue with parents today, the lack of education and understanding, hopefully, we can help change some of the bad behaviors of parents.

A few years ago, I had an encounter with a very troubled parent. Without getting into details about myself, at the point in my own life, I had suffer the consequences of going to jail. During my stay at the Department of Corrections, I was cuffed to a man who was put in jail for murdering his 5 years old daughter. This man came home from work and relieved the baby sitter of her duties. Within an hour of the sitter leaving, his daughter began to crying uncontrollably. What comes next is disturbing. With his daughter crying and his patience gone, together with a lack of knowledge and education of how to understand and ease his daughter's tears, he became enraged and began to hit and shake this little girl until she laid there lifeless. This little girl died because her father lacked nurturance, patience, and understanding of an infant's needs and behaviors. This is a very drastic but very real scenario. Such an outcome could be avoided with educating parents through the Nurturing Families Network Program.

I understand the position we are in economically, but I believe more though has not be put into the decision concerning cutting our budget. The Nurturing families Network Program is very vital to the long term economic growth of our future. By funding this program and keeping it growing strong, we are enduring a better future for our children and our children's children. Through the Nurturing Programs educating parents on all aspects of a child's behavior, growth and development are very important ways of dealing with a child on a nurturing, caring, loving basis. These children are going to grow up to be beautiful, fruitful children, who will never experience the misfortune of neglect.

They will grow to be strong and prosperous. As long as there is a Nurturing Program educating parents and these parents using the skills they've acquired through the program with their children, there is a better chance these children will go on to become successful in school, and more importantly, in life. With no more parents attending this vital program, we can bring down the high number of child abuse, neglect and death cases concerning children in this country. Children are the most precious gift in the world. So why would the thought of reducing the education programs their parents can attend and receive this vital education, which empowers the parents with the right tools to raise their children in the proper manner, even considered. The Nurturing Program is very beneficial to all those involved, but most importantly beneficial to the children of tomorrow's future. I will close with a quote from MLK:

"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about the things that matter."

Thank You and God bless,

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