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Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice

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Virginia Gerena Testimony

for Public Hearing

For Asthma Speakers Bureau

Health & Hospital Sub Committee

Appropriations

Good afternoon Health Appropriations Committee members. My name is Ginny Gerena, I'm testifying today on behalf of CCEJ, (Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice) for the importance of continued funding of the Asthma Speakers Bureau of the Asthma Outreach Education Program which I have been of member since 2002. I'm an AU, (Advocacy Unlimited) Graduate in 2001. I'm also an active Advocate for several other State Agencies such as DHMAS, Hartford/West Hartford System of Care Collaborative with DCF, I attend CTN, (Connecticut Transformation Network) at CVH, and CAC (Catchment Area Council Board Member Meetings for the Northwest Regional Mental Health Board) to which I was appointed by the Mayor of the City of Hartford to represent Youth, Children, Seniors & disabled individuals. I'm also a Vet Representative for DHMAS. I am also a registered voter and I have Asthma.

I have done many presentations and tabling for CCEJ for the Asthma Speakers Bureau for many Community Organizations such as Schools, Urban League, St. Augustine Church-Block Parties, CHS, Hispanic Health Council and other Health Fairs in Hartford. Where we inform and make individuals aware of the importance of treating Asthma by local Healthcare Providers. We have also done School Bus monitoring of Diesel Emissions to help pass the Non-Idling Law in 2002, we fought for the closing of the Hartford Land Fill. I feel that this process greatly eliminates the need to go to local Emergency Rooms which in turn will alleviate State Spending.

On a personal note I would like to add that being a disabled Veteran, I go to the VA in Newington, CT. I finally got a VASH Voucher, (Veterans Assistive Supportive Housing Voucher) after having resided in Transitional Housing and shelters after 3 years of waiting. Being homeless greatly aggravated my asthma. I appreciate the fact that issue was finally addressed by the VA. Thank you for considering this matter.

Virginia Gerena

March 2, 2011