



73-2c

**CT Association for United Spanish Action Testimony on
the elimination of Hispanic Human Resource Development line item**

Statement of Carmen Sierra
CAUSA before the
Appropriation Committee
March 5, 2011

Sen. Harp, Rep. Walker and members of the committee:

I would like to share information about the Connecticut Association for United Spanish Action (CAUSA, Inc.), which has been serving the Hispanic and Latino population in Connecticut for over thirty years.

CAUSA, Inc. is dedicated to enhancing the general well being of the Hispanic and Latino population in Connecticut with special emphasis on advocacy, research and technical assistance through and with its member agencies.

CAUSA, Inc.'s member agencies work in the areas of education, health, elderly services, child care, HIV/AIDS, housing and economic development. Over the past five years, these agencies serve more than 300,000 of the state's most underprivileged and vulnerable Latinos. Through the assistance of these agencies, many immigrants are able to become naturalized U.S. citizens. 45.2% of immigrants (or 127,302 people) in Connecticut were naturalized citizens in 2008- meaning that they are eligible to vote. The modest investment in these Hispanic agencies who work with Latinos as they begin their journey to becoming "New Americans" is money well spent. Immigrants are not only integral to the state's economy as workers, but also account for billions of dollars in tax revenue and consumer purchasing power. Connecticut's 9,408 Latino-owned businesses had sales and receipts of \$1.3 billion and employed 8,762 people in 2002, the last year for which data is available.

Since its inception, the CAUSA, Inc.'s mission has remained the same: to better meet the growing needs of the Hispanic community, to obtain a fair share of resources, and to help its member agencies to secure new resources. The Latino share of Connecticut's population grew from 6.5% in 1990, to 9.4% in 2000, to 12.0% (or 420,150 people) in 2008.

The Latino communities in Connecticut have been hard hit in this most recent economic downturn. It is with this as a backdrop that I come here to advocate not eliminating the Hispanic Human Resource Development Program line item. We deliver services at low cost to those who need it the most. If the programs are cut, the result of people being harmed will be enormous.

Latinos contribute to the welfare of this state. We work hard; we contribute in income tax, sales tax, provide jobs, keep youth safe/busy and provide a number of health/ educational programs and many more. The State has worked with us as partners for years, and we have helped save many lives and have been part of the economic success. We are part of the "**Safety Net**" **as well as a critical component for an economically viable future in the state.**

On behalf of the thousands of Latino residents we serve each year, I would ask you to maintain this line-item in the budget. In doing so, you'll be standing up for the needs of this important community. Thank you.

If you have any questions, please contact us at (860) 424-0077.