

To: The Honorable Eileen Daily, Senate Chair, Finance Revenue and Bonding Committee
The Honorable Patricia Widlitz, House Chair, Finance Revenue and Bonding

From: Merle W. Harris, President Emerita, Charter Oak State College
Member, Connecticut Association for Human Services (CAHS) Board

Subj: Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

Date: March 4, 2011

I am writing in support of a Connecticut Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). The EITC is not a giveaway, but rather is a reward for something most of us value – hard work. There are many low income jobs that are critical to the well-being of our society, including CNAs and Early Childhood workers. Individuals in these and many similar positions struggle to make ends meet. The EITC makes work pay.

During my tenure as President of Charter Oak State College, I personally witnessed the value of the federal EITC. Charter Oak's Women in Transition program provided an opportunity for single mothers in low paying jobs to complete a college degree. Many of these women, who were working, while going to school and raising a family, benefitted from the federal EITC program. The funds were used for necessities, not luxuries, and made a difference in the lives of these women and their families.

Connecticut needs to join the 23 other states and the District of Columbia that already have an EITC. As you are looking at our entire tax system, it is an opportune time to endorse an EITC for hard-working, low-wage families. Connecticut families with incomes below \$26,000 already pay a higher tax rate (income, sales, excise, property taxes) than the top 1% of our state's workers. Some of the other changes in our tax system you are considering would increase the burden on these families. A state EITC will address this disparity.

I urge your support for a state EITC.