

March 4, 2011



Testimony before the Finance, Revenue & Bonding Committee
S.B. 1007, An Act Concerning the Governor's Revenue Plan
Submitted by Ariel Martinez, Executive Director New Life Corporation

Senator Daily and Representative Widlitz, and members of the committee:

My name is Ariel Martinez and I'm 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 financial education and asset-building.

While we understand the tough economic times we all face and the tremendously difficult challenge your committee has in working with Governor Malloy on dealing with the state's budget gap, I submit this statement in support of a State of Connecticut Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). Over the past seven (7) years we have run a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) campaign in the cities of New Haven and West Haven. In partnership with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), we have assisted over **12,000 low-income** families helping them access over **\$26.7** million dollars in Federal/State refunds and Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC). While we are a small organization of only four staff, we work in collaboration with local organizations and a volunteer workforce which we recruit, train, certify and manage a on yearly bases. Over the past seven years, we've worked with more than 520 volunteers in carrying out our mission in the service of these poorest of families.

That said we have seen first-hand how this program directly benefits hard-working families, and how our cities and municipalities benefit from the extra earned capital which is spent right where they live. I'm sure this committee will agree that if there ever was a time when low- and moderate-income workers many of which are now unemployed, needed assistance in making their hard-earned money stretch in order to feed, house and take care of their families, this is it. Homes are being foreclosed upon, jobs are being lost and the dollar is being asked to buy less at a higher cost.

All over the state there are stories like ours and organizations who have been working hard at the grassroots level delivering these services. Likewise, there are organizations like the Connecticut Association of Human Services (CAHS) and legislators like Senators Martin Looney and Toni Harp who have championed this cause for years. So it is with the greatest of enthusiasm that I submit my testimony joining your passionate support of the EITC.

That said, I respectfully urge our legislators to make this the year that Connecticut joins the ranks of states which have passed this legislation and have brought a new stream of financial and moral wealth to our most needy of residents in Connecticut.

I thank you all for your considerate and attention to this matter.

Respectfully Submitted:
Ariel Martinez; Executive Director