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**WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 936**  
**AN ACT TEMPORARILY EXTENDING THE LOOK-BACK PERIOD**  
**TO DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY FOR UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION.**

On behalf of the employment unit of Connecticut's legal aid programs, I am writing to express our support for SB 936. This temporary adjustment to General Statutes § 31-232b is needed so that Connecticut will continue to qualify for the Extended Benefits (EB) program through 2011. EB provides an additional 13-20 weeks of benefits to jobless workers who have maxed out the unemployment benefits normally available to them.

EB only comes into play during periods of high unemployment: states "trigger on" to EB when their unemployment rates reach the EB thresholds. States then "trigger off" once the required unemployment rates have not increased during either of the past two years. This is called the "look-back period". Although the cost of the EB is usually a 50-50 split between the state and federal government, Congress has been funding 100% of the cost during this recession.

With the Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act of 2010, P.L. 111-312, Congress voted to continue fully funding the EB program through 2011, and they increased the EB "look-back" period to three years. The look-back period was increased because otherwise many states would "trigger off" the program before the end of 2011 and would not be able to take advantage of fully federally funded EB for the entire year. P.L. 111-312 allows states to amend their laws to temporarily change the EB "on" and "off" indicators.

SB 936 makes this temporary change that will enable Connecticut to stay on the EB program for longer than we otherwise would have. This will provide much-needed benefits to Connecticut's long-term unemployed through 2011, funded entirely by federal dollars. On behalf of our client community, we urge you take advantage of this opportunity to help many of Connecticut's unemployed residents at no cost to the state's unemployment trust fund.

Susan Nofi-Bendici  
Deputy Director