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Testimony before the Appropriations Committee on the Department of Social Services Budget

by Jane McNichol, Executive Director
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Good evening. I am Jane McNichol, Executive Director of the Legal Assistance Resource Center of Connecticut, the advocacy and support center for legal services programs in the state. We represent the interests of very low income residents of the state. LARCC also convenes the Welfare Working Group, a group of about 25 advocates on welfare issues. Since 1996, the Welfare Working Group has monitored the federal TANF program and the state's family welfare program and its impact on low-income families with children in the state.

I am here this evening to urge that you reject, or at least modify, Governor Malloy's proposal to cut \$9 million from the Temporary Assistance to Families -TANF line item in the Department of Social Services budget. The rationale for this cut is caseload trends. This means that the number of families receiving cash assistance is expected continue to fall; the number of families receiving cash assistance fell from 19,074 to 17,883 in 2011. This continues a fairly consistent downward trend in the family welfare caseload, except for a fairly significant uptick in the caseload in the fall of 2009. This has happened during a disastrous economic downturn.

Across the nation, this recession has demonstrated the failure of TANF to provide an adequate safety net for families during difficult times. But Connecticut's program is worse than most. According to a study by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, **Connecticut's TANF program was the 41st least responsive to the recession when compared to the family welfare programs in other states in the country.**

For the past 14 years, since the TANF block grant was adopted, the number of families receiving cash assistance in Connecticut has been falling – from over 50,000 families to about 18,000 now. As the information attached to my testimony details, **the amount that Connecticut spends on cash assistance has fallen from \$320 million in 1997 to \$92.5 million in 2010.**

But the money that we put into **support services, education, training and subsidized employment for parents in families receiving cash assistance has risen by only \$6 million – from about \$12 million to about \$18 million.**

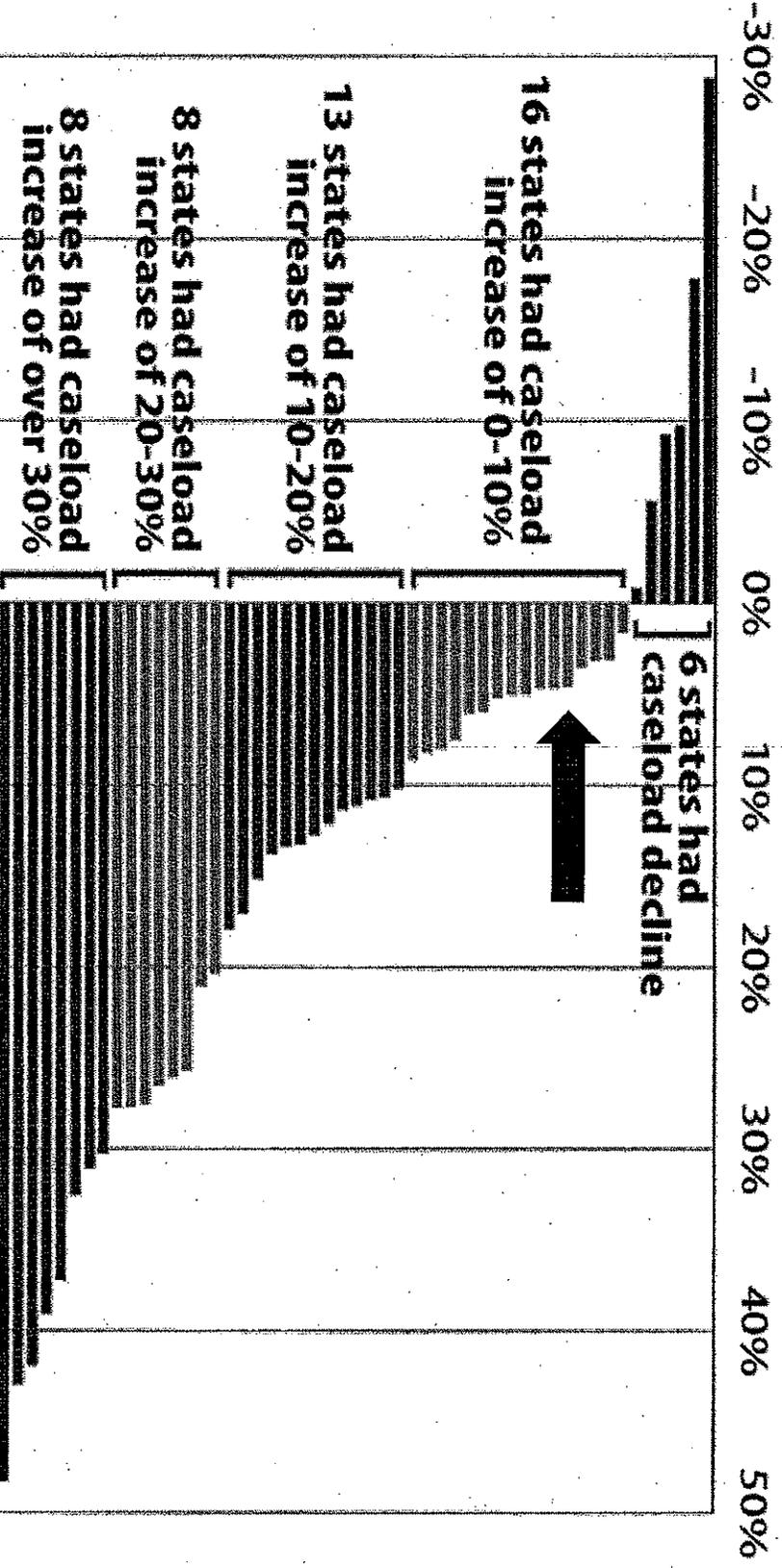
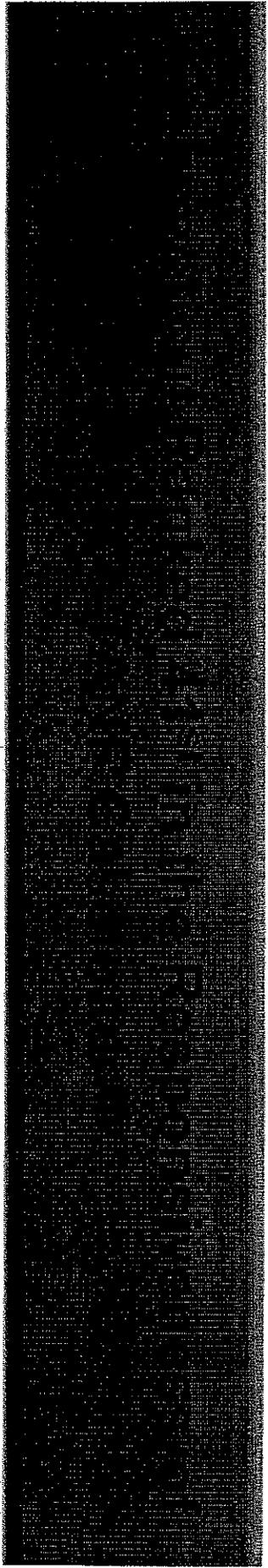
Rather than investing more money into these important supports, adopting creative education and training programs or providing subsidized employment for people who need job experience, we have used the TANF block grant money to plug holes in the state budget.

It is time to stop moving money out of the Jobs First program and to start designing and funding creative responses for families who are striving to get jobs with few skills in a very bad economy.

The Department of Labor convened a working group over the past summer to study the JFES program. The working group designed four pilot programs. Rather than embracing these proposals and allocating some TANF money to these pilots, the Governor's budget proposal cuts the \$150,000 allocated to a small pilot project in the budget last year.

I urge the Committee to reject the proposal to eliminate the pilot and further to allocate a portion of the \$9 million proposed to be cut from the TANF line item to fund more support to families moving from welfare to work.

Thank you for your work on these important issues.



How Connecticut Spends its TANF and MOE Funds – 1997 – 2010

Combined TANF and MOE Spending - FFY 1997 – 2010 (in millions of dollars)

TANF is the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families block grant, set up to replace the federal AFDC program. Connecticut is eligible for \$267 million a year in federal TANF funds and we generally receive and spend all that we are eligible for.

MOE stands for Maintenance of Effort funds, the funds that a state is required to spend in order to be eligible to receive federal TANF funds (similar to a match). Connecticut is required to spend \$184 - \$196 million in state MOE funds each year.

The information in the chart below is drawn from reports by the Department of Social Services to the TANF Council or to the Chairs of the Human Services Committee.

	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005	2007	2009	2010
Transfer to SSBG	5.9	24.1	26.7	26.7	26.7	26.2	26.7	26.7
Cash Assistance	320.6	202.0	158.4	124.4	125.7	106.8	89.2	92.5
Child Care*	75.5	115.0	96.1	38.3	12.5	32.6	27.2	34.1
Other Services					0.3	0.1	0	0
Assistance - Prior Law			6.4	1.6	2.2	2.5	2.1	1.6
Other Work Act/ Educ.; 2010 – Sub. Employ.			.4	16.8	7.7	1.1	0	16.4
GoodNewsGarage; DOL Services; Welfare to Work				1.6	1.2	0.3	0	
Employment Serv/ IPC	12.1	16.0	16.1	15.1	15.8	21.7	18.9	18.3
Transportation/Safety Net			5.1	5.3	4.8	4.0	5.6	5.5
Diversion; 2010 (ARRA)								14.9
Rental Assistance				1.8	2.3			
Energy								
Medicaid for Non-Citizens			5.0	8.3	8.6			
Pregnancy Prevention*	0	0	21.4	38.9	66.4	76.2	70.3	73.8
2-Parent Family Form.*	0	0	0	18.1	7.7	10.0	11.4	22.1
Prior Law*			13.0	15.9	15.5	18.7	20.3	14.1
Administration	37.3	37.0	37.0	21.5	28.6	34.3	37.3	30.2
Information Technology	2.5	1.0	1.7	0.8	0.7	0.9	.5	.4
Family Supp. Hsg (DCF)					0.9			
Other*	0	55.0	65.4	126.4	156.6	163.5	194.7	174.0
Total	453.9	450.1	452.7	461.5	484.2	498.9	504.2	524.6

* for more details, see attached pages.

OTHER includes:	1999	2001	2003	2005	2007	2009	2010
Teen Pregnancy Prevention	0.7		recorded in different line				
State "Medicaid" for Non-Citizens					12.2	15.1	
Faith Based Initiatives				0.1			
Family Violence Prevention							
Outreach Services			2.1	3.8	0.5	4.2	0.9
Supportive Housing (DSS)						0.3	1.0
SDE School Readiness			32.9	44.4	54.3	65.2	67.0
SDE Adult Education		0.7	0.8	0.5		0.7	0.3
SDE Family Resource Centers		1.6			0.7		
SDE Priority School Districts							
DCF Case Management Services	28.8	32.2	40.1	40.2	40.1	34.4	34.8
DCF Substance Abuse Screening	0.6	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.2
DCF Trtm't/Prev/Child Abuse	3.9	3.4	4.1	3.6	3.5	3.6	0.9
DCF Family Preservation Services	3.4	3.2	3.3	3.0	2.9	2.6	0.3
DCF Substance Abuse Services	1.0	0.7	0.8	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.1
DCF Local Systems of Care		0.3	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.1	
DCF Community Emergency Services		0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1		
DCF Family Violence Services		0.3	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.3
DCF Early Childhood Development		1.8	0.4	0.2	0.4		
DCF Support for Recovering Families			2.6	4.1	0.1		
DCF Child Guidance Clinics							
DCF Family Support Teams				4.5	3.3	3.5	3.0
DCF Supportive Housing							
DMHAS Substance Abuse Grants			0.2				
DMHAS Mental Health Grants			0.9				
DMHAS Managed Service System			0.3				
DCF Investigations			27.2	32.8	36.2	46.3	50.4
DCF Intensive In-home Services			3.7	5.5			
CHEFA Loans to Day Care Centers		2.0					
Certificate Eligibility Development				0.6			
CCMIS (Maximus Contract for CCCP)		7.6	4.8	4.1		9.5	6.7
DCF Individualized Family Support			0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	
DMR Family Support			0.3				
DMR Respite Centers			0.3	0.4	0.6	0.9	0.8
DMR Respite Grants			0.4	0.4		0.3	0.3
Judicial Alternative Incarceration				2.3	2.0	2.4	2.3
Judicial Multi-Systemic Therapy				3.7	3.7	3.6	4.1
Judicial Court-Based Juvenile Assessments				0.7	0.8	0.4	0.4
Unspecified MOE (Other)	18.0						
TOTAL*	56.4	54.2	126.6	156.4	163.3	194.5	173.8

*In some cases, notably 2001, total does not match the total on the summary reports because the spending reports to the federal government were revised and no revision of the more detailed report to the Legislature was prepared.

	2001	2003	2005	2007	2009	2010
PREVENTION OF OUT OF WEDLOCK PREGNANCIES includes:						
Teen Pregnancy Prevention						
Teen Pregnancy	1.0	1.1	2.1	1.8	1.1	1.2
SDE Priority School Districts	7.4	7.5	18.1	26.8	17.6	19.3
SDE Priority School Districts ESH	2.5	3.0	3.8	4.3	3.5	6.1
SDE Youth Services Bureau	2.2	2.7	2.9	2.9	3.5	4.1
SDE Transitional School Districts	0.8					
SDE Interdistrict Coop Grant	0.9	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.3	
SDE Young Parents Program	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2
SDE Family Resource Centers		4.3	7.1	6.4	5.4	6.7
SDE Safe Learning Grant		0.2				
OPM LEAP	2.3	0.7	0.5	0.9	0.8	0.6
OPM Neighborhood Youth Centers	2.0	1.0		1.6	2.2	1.1
OPM Grants to Boys and Girls Clubs	0.7	0.1				
OPM Children and Youth Development	0.2					
OPM Truancy Prevention	0.6					
OPM Governor's Prevention Partnership	0.5					
DPH Paternity Registry	0.2					
DPH Pregnancy Healthline		0.1				
DCF Early Childhood Development		2.1	1.0	1.1	1.3	0.3
DCF Extended Day Treatment			3.9	6.7	6.2	6.8
DMHAS Special Population		2.7	17.1	16.7	22.5	23.0
DMHAS Grants for Substance Abuse		0.3				
DMHAS Governor's Partnership		0.1				
DSS Family Planning		0.1				
Judicial IOM						
Judicial Counseling Services		1.1	0.9	1.3	1.0	1.1
Judicial Truancy Services		0.3	0.2			
Judicial STARS		0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6
Judicial JSRC		2.5				
Judicial Juv Justice Center		2.6	3.0			
Judicial Alt Detention Program		2.9	2.6	2.1	1.3	
Judicial Community Detention Program		2.2	2.0	2.5	2.9	2.9
TOTAL	21.5	38.7	66.2	76.5	70.4	74.0

CHILD CARE includes:	2001	2003	2005	2007	2009	2010
Employment Services Child Care	2.8	10.1	0.6	0.8	4.4	4.5
Work Related Child Care	13.8					
Child Care Certificate Program	16.7	12.6	2.0	18.3	10.5	13.1
Transitional Child Care	26.9		10.0	13.6	12.3	10.5
SDE School Readiness	35.5	15.7				
Care4Kids Stimulus Checks						6.0
TOTAL	95.7	38.4	12.6	32.7	27.2	34.1
2-PARENT FAMILY FORMATION includes:						
Fatherhood Initiative		0.6	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.2
DOC Education and Training		9.7	4.1	5.8	2.1	1.8
DOC Addiction Services for Non-Custodial Parents		7.5	2.8	3.5	8.6	19.9
DMHAS Problem Gambling		0.3	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.2
TOTAL		18.1	7.6	10.0	11.3	22.1
PRIOR LAW includes:						
DCF Case Management Services	3.1	10.2	9.0	11.8	14.4	12.8
DCF Family Preservation	1.2	1.2	0.8	0.7	0.5	
DCF EA Foster Care & Res. Treatment	6.6	4.5	3.7	4.5	3.7	
DCF Foster Care "Non-Claimable Balance"			2.0	1.7	1.6	1.3
TOTAL	10.9	15.9	15.5	18.7	20.2	14.1

