

Good morning. My name is Kim Clark Hart and I am a co-leader for Mothers for Justice, a grassroots advocacy group in New Haven. I am here to speak in favor of **SB 209 An Act Increasing Educational Incentives in the Jobs First Employment Services Program.**

I think a pilot program is just what the state of Connecticut needs. According to the Connecticut Association for Basic Human Needs at least 50% of people receiving cash assistance do not have a GED or High School diploma. And these are the same people that are expected to go through job training in order to keep the full amount of cash assistance.

Mothers for Justice is asking the state to allow us to go back to school and get our GED or High School diploma and then go through job training without being penalized by cutting cash assistance.

Currently, it is a catch 22 system. I don't want my cash assistance cut by not complying with the job training criteria. At the same time, I don't want to waste the state's money going to a training that won't lead to gainful employment because I don't have a GED or high school diploma. What makes sense is for the state to make helping me get my GED or high school diploma a priority so that when I complete my job training it will lead to a job that makes me self-sufficient. Self – sufficiency is our goal, right? Thank you.