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**PUBLIC HEARING RE GOVERNOR'S PROPOSED BUDGET  
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**

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February 22, 2013

Good evening - my name is Michaela Irene Fissel, and I am a current resident of Windsor, Connecticut. Thank you, respective members of the Appropriations Committee, for allowing me to share my testimony this evening.

As some of you know, I have made it a practice to refrain from becoming emotional during my testimony because more often it seems like the numbers and statistics speak louder than tears and anger. In regards to the current budget proposal, the Department of Social Services has demonstrated a tendency to give you unreliable projections that continuously prove to be weighted heavier than the lives of those individuals who actually represent the data that is described through their outcomes and indicators.

One poignant example of DSS' inability to project accurate numbers would be the recent LIA Husky D scandal. Yes, that is right, I believe that it was a scandal because you should be outraged by the fact that DSS gave you inaccurate numbers, wrote policies, and put the State of Connecticut into a deeper budgetary deficit, and then they had the audacity to ask for a waiver. It is a shame that DSS believes that they are above those they provide services to, when we consider that all Husky A parents are asking for is a waiver to get out of poverty.

To be quite frank, I am disgusted by the proposal to end Husky A/Medicaid coverage for parents who are the primary provider for their families.

As someone who has come up from nothing as a single mother, and as someone who greatly benefited from the HUSKY A program, I am outraged that this has even been presented to you. I mean, look at the numbers if that is all we are taught to rely on. Consider how much you would have to lose if your annual budget was \$20,628 a year. But, of course it's not like these families have anything to begin with, so they should be grateful for what they are provided by D.S.S. – right?

Being a single mother with an income that is was between 133% and 185% of the federal poverty level means that we are unable to pay any additional cost. I have included on the second page of my testimony, my budget from April 2011, including income and expenses. I would have lost my health insurance if this were to have been adopted during that time.

I am just shocked that I we are even put in the position to consider this. This is what we have come to? We are really going to take away the health insurance of these parents and assume that they are going to be able to afford to buy into the Health Insurance Exchange?

Honestly, I would have stopped working my part-time job, and sought additional state aid to make up for the deficit in some other area of my life, because I had to... because if I didn't I wouldn't have been able to feed my child because I did not have the resources to pay for health insurance.

So, now I am still in this bracket, only I don't have to worry about you taking away this vital resource for me, because the state assisted me to get on my feet and I will be eligible for health insurance through my employer in just about 2 months. Thank God that I pushed myself through school, and there was HUSKY insurance because now after going to school for the last 9 years, I will be graduating in May with my Masters. So thank you, thank you for not crippling me during the last three years that was making 133% and 185% of the federal poverty level.

So what should you do? I would suggest stop listening to DSS when they make projections that target vulnerable populations in an attempt to balance a budget that they have been unable to manage. I would also

suggest making Care 4 Kids available for children whose parents are enrolled in college level courses through state universities and community colleges. I think it would be reasonable to established eligibility criterion which would include that parents will need to maintain a 3.0 GPA, and be enrolled in at least part-time classes to allow them the opportunity to be eligible for financial aid.

April 2011

<b>EXPENSES</b>		
	Car Insurance	\$120.00
	Electricity	\$76.00
	Internet	\$19.95
	Childcare	\$230.00
	Rent	\$850.00
	Natural Gas	\$52.23
	Food	\$212.75
	Gas	\$170.00
	Cell Phone	\$10.00
	Total:	\$1,740.93

<b>INCOME</b>	
Full-time Job	\$1,393.00
Part-time Job	\$375.00
Total:	\$1,767.00

**ANNUAL EXPENSES:** \$20,891.16

**ANNUAL INCOME:** \$21,204.00

So, now it appears that I should have about: \$312.84...

\$312.84 to account for the following expenses that I did account for at the beginning of 2011:

	Christmas Presents	\$80.00
	5 months of Winter (Total increased cost of Natural Gas and Electricity)	\$750.00
	Car Tax	\$74.00
	TIRES	\$404.20
	Radiator for Car	\$327.73
	4 Oil Changes	\$35.98
		\$1,671.91

How did I pay for this? I have enough common sense, as a poor person who is of the working lower class to have realized very early on that I need to always save my tax return reimbursement. With that money I am able to pay for unforeseen expenses, along with allowing my son to participate in school activities and field trips, along with purchasing him thrift store cloths. I also have been able to pay the additional cost of childcare needed to go to school because Care 4 Kids does not provide assistance for children whose parents are in college or attending a university. They will tell you that they do pay for educational hours, but that is for high school hours and state-funded training programs.

Thank you for considering my testimony this evening, and allowing me to share my perspective.