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**Testimony before the Finance Revenue and Bonding Committee
Re. HB 6566, An Act Concerning Transparency in Economic Assistance Programs
March 11, 2013**

Submitted by Liz Dupont-Diehl, Policy Director, Connecticut Association for Human Services
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Good afternoon, Senator Fonfara and Representative Widlitz and members of the committee. My name is Liz Dupont-Diehl and I am the Policy Director for the Connecticut Association for Human Services. We seek to end poverty and empower all families to build a secure economic future. As the Connecticut KIDS COUNT partner CAHS has decades of experience advocating for issues such as the EITC and offering programs to increase financial capability and access to benefits.

CAHS offers its support for 6566, and efforts to promote transparency and accessibility for data generally. The bill will support and enhance two critical areas; transparency, and data collection.

First, transparency. Connecticut is fortunate to have effective “sunshine” laws allowing the public access to the meetings and documents that impact its well being. These laws protect the public’s right to access critical information about the functioning of government and public services. It’s critical to preserve this access and make it meaningful and a searchable database will serve the public interest by ensuring people can access and analyze data.

Secondly, this bill will provide a needed prompt for government to compile and offer information about the expenditures and effectiveness of government in a meaningful form. CAHS and others have noticed that continual cutbacks in many state agencies over the years have often made it difficult for interested citizens and advocates to get data from the state about many indicators. Of course, data is critical to understand how our government is doing and what needs to be improved. This bill will advance the public’s right to know critical information about the functioning and effectiveness of government.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your consideration.