



The Connecticut Association for Human Services  
110 Bartholomew Avenue · Suite 4030  
Hartford, Connecticut 06106  
[www.cahs.org](http://www.cahs.org)

Luis Caban, President  
James P. Horan, Executive Director

---

**Testimony before the Labor Committee  
Re. SB 387, AN ACT TO RAISE THE MINIMUM WAGE AND BASE FUTURE RAISES ON THE  
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX**

**January 31, 2013**

Submitted by Liz Dupont-Diehl, Policy Director, Connecticut Association for Human Services  
[ldupont-diehl@cahs.org](mailto:ldupont-diehl@cahs.org), (203) 667-5956

---

Good afternoon, Senator Osten and Representative Tercyak, and members of the committee. My name is Liz Dupont-Diehl and I am the Policy Director for the Connecticut Association for Human Services. CAHS seeks to end poverty and empower all families to build a secure economic future. CAHS produces research and analysis on child poverty and other issues as needed to drive advocacy, and we work to create fair opportunity for economic success for all families. CAHS also operates a number of programs to help people become self-sufficient, such as Volunteer Income Tax Assistance, financial literacy classes and helping people connect with eligible benefits to help them access health care, meet basic needs and become self-sufficient.

As advocates devoted to Family Economic Success, CAHS sees a lot to be concerned about lately. We reported this month that the number of working poor families in Connecticut – that is, earning 200% or less of poverty, or \$45,622 for a family of four – rose 5% since 2007. Now, 21% of our 389,000 working families are low-income.

Our report also found that 61% of low-income families have a high housing burden- paying more than 33% of their income on rent – and that the rise in low-income working families is increasingly affecting children.

I don't need to repeat that Connecticut's minimum wage gives a worker \$17,160 a year ----with no vacations or time out sick; that 80% of the 100,000 Connecticut workers who earn minimum wage are older than 20, and have a high school diploma.

Raising the minimum wage won't do it alone. We need to ensure working families get by – can get affordable housing and health care, can afford to provide for themselves and contribute to their communities. We need to retain Connecticut's EITC, raise the minimum wage, and protect the safety net. These are all things we know how to do – and they are investments we need to make.

I want us all to be aware that when families can't pay for their basic necessities, we all pay. We know that children in poverty don't attain full educational success or earning potential. Many working families are relying on state programs for the basic necessities - food, heat, health care and child care. This can cost taxpayers \$1,200 or \$1,700 a month. We hear today that Connecticut residents are not saving for a rainy day; don't have enough money in the bank to get by for three months if they lose their job -- never mind save for retirement.

But increasing the minimum wage is critical – and within our reach. I know you have testimony from employers who opt to pay their workers more than the minimum wage because they know it's the right thing to do. They want to live in communities where their workers can afford to buy homes and send provide for their kids. That doesn't happen on \$8.25 an hour. I'll just mention that numerous studies that show increasing the minimum wage has been proven not to result in lost jobs but in an improved economy.

Connecticut is heading down a dangerous road in which 21% of working families don't earn enough to provide the basics. This costs us more, in benefits; it costs us all in lost productivity, as kids grow up in poverty; it costs us in the quality of life for all of us

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

###