

Human Services Public Hearing

March 4, 2014

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 251

Submitted by: Krista Alston, SCSU BSW student, DSS recipient

Members of the Human Services Committee; my name is Krista Alston and I am a senior social work student at Southern CT State University and recipient of the Department of Social Services. I would like to begin by thanking all of you for allowing me to submit my testimony in support of SB-251: To ensure that documents received by recipients of or applicants for public assistance are processed in a timely, accurate manner.

According to an article in the CT Mirror, DSS serves about 750,000 individuals. Although the modernization and new scanning system was enacted to benefit such individuals, "...backlogs in the scanning process led to significant problems getting applications and renewal forms processed" (CT Mirror, Becker, 2013). As a DSS recipient and intern at a non-profit agency I can attest to the letters of discontinuance sent out by the department due to an inability to process paperwork in a timely manner. I am a mother of a 3-year old little girl and a full time social work student; I simply cannot afford to lose my benefits due to an organizational glitch. People who might oppose this may be concerned with the budget required to promptly process applications and renewals; however the benefits clients receive help to stimulate our economy. In an article in the Hartford Courant, Beals (2013) includes, "The cuts [SNAP benefits] are expected to translate into a decline in revenue at supermarkets and local grocers, where 83 percent of benefits are redeemed in the state" (articles.courant.com).

During this difficult economic period it is unfair and unrealistic to discontinue public assistance due to an inability to promptly process paperwork. There are so many CT residents that rely on DSS benefits; this is why I am in support of SB-251: To ensure that documents received by recipients of or applicants for public assistance are processed in a timely, accurate manner. I ask that the committee vote this bill favorably. I would like to thank you all for your time.

Sincerely,

*Krista Alston,*

SCSU BSW student