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Testimony Before The Appropriations Committee
Public Hearing Regarding
The Governor's Proposal FY 2016-2017
Biennial Budget

Good Afternoon Senator Bye, Representative Walker and Committee Members.

My name Matthew McClanahan, I'm the Communications Coordinator at the Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice. I started as a volunteer and worked in the summer camp where students learned about asthma triggers. We educate the community on asthma triggers and symptoms and explain it in ways people understand. Many people who have been educated by us go on to educate their friends and relatives. This prevents unnecessary trips to the ER because people are learning how important it is to manage their asthma,

I personally have asthma and have learned a lot more about what causes myself and step father to have symptoms. Since we live next to I-91, we learned from CCEJ about the dangers of particulate matter and ground level ozone. We now have filters on our air system and vent the house daily bringing in as much fresh air as possible from the opposite side of the house.

CCEJ also educates people on the importance on reading labels on chemical containers to locate strong additives that will impair their ability to breathe adequately. We have our lines open to those who will like to get more information on asthma triggers and what they can do to prevent them. I am personally sensitive to strong cleaning agents and incense. I notice breathing becomes difficult. I become light headed and weak due to the lack of oxygen. Often times I will cough for hours after the inhaler has been used. Loss of speech follows suit. My stepdad and I know what to do in the even we have an episode. There are people who don't have **good** health insurance which doesn't allow them to speak to a medical professional as often as they like. Many people on Medicaid tell us they wait for hours to see a doctor and then have 5 mins. to explain everything. They often feel rushed because most doctors don't really take a lot of time with them. We are the connection to medical help for the community. We help them to communicate with their doctors and help them to understand their management plans. For this reason alone, our program is very valuable to the community because that call to us often prevents misuse of medication and insures that people follow their doctors' orders.

Thank you for your time.

Matthew McClanahan

