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**TESTIMONY ON BEHALF OF MARIA MEDINA
BEFORE THE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
RE: RSB-280 AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL
SERVICES
JAN 29, 2015**

My name is Maria Medina, and I am Bridgeport resident residing at 102 Clinton Avenue with my husband and five children. I remember a time when I could easily contact someone at our local Department of Social Services (DSS) office to address and solve issues I might be having right away. Those days have since passed.

Our family has repeatedly been cut off from SNAP and HUSKY benefits time and time again because of administrative errors and through NO fault of our own. **These unexpected and unwarranted breaks in coverage have been difficult for our family because we rely on these programs to assist us with food and healthcare.**

What is really bothersome is DSS's inability to perform basic functions, such as maintaining documents. I always send every requested document to DSS on time; yet, DSS always seems to misplace them. I have sent documents in the mail, only to have DSS claim that they never arrived. I have even dropped documents off in person, and somehow they are misplaced. In fact, my authorized representative at the Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition received a call from DSS just yesterday asking, yet again, for documents that I have already dropped off in person.

Even more troubling is that the Bridgeport DSS office cannot handle the number of clients which it serves. On January 14, I went in person to drop off paperwork that was due on January 16. **After waiting in line for over 2 hours, I was told that I could not be seen and would have to return the next day.** This treatment is unacceptable. While I was able to return, not all people can. Asking a parent to give up another day's income to maintain SNAP and HUSKY benefits for their children is unacceptable.

Our children's well-being should not be jeopardized because DSS is unable to perform its basic administrative functions. Please help fix these problems so families like mine can get the assistance we need.

Sincerely,

Maria Medina

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