



Testimony before the Humans Services Committee

*Opposing Proposed Bill 5822: AN ACT REQUIRING PHOTO IDENTIFICATION ON ELECTRONIC BENEFIT TRANSFER CARDS*

February 5, 2015

Good afternoon, Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie and members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Lucy Nolan and I am the executive director of End Hunger Connecticut!, a statewide anti-hunger and food security organization that focuses on policy, education and outreach on the federal food programs. I am here today to oppose Proposed Bill 5822, An Act Requiring Photo Identification on Electronic Benefit Transfer Cards.

This bill is unnecessary, would create a significant cost to the state, and would be yet one more barrier for people to access SNAP. The USDA provides states with other more effective measures to detect and address EBT retailer and recipient fraud. In fact, the USDA opposes the inclusion of a recipient's photo on an EBT card does not help detect or prevent EBT fraud. Maine may lose their administrative funding for SNAP, which as for all states is one half of the cost to administer the program, for not requiring photos on EBT.

After witnessing the rollout of photo EBT in Massachusetts and Maine, End Hunger Connecticut! believes that state photo EBT requirements are exacerbating stigma in the SNAP program and are creating new access barriers for many low income households. SNAP benefits are shared among a household, and a household is defined as those that prepare food together. Since there is only one EBT card per household there have been reports in both states that some SNAP retailers have unlawfully prevented SNAP household members from food shopping if their photo is not on the EBT card. Other households have had their SNAP benefits delayed by the SNAP state agency due to difficulties reaching the SNAP offices for a photo and/or deactivation of cards.

Further, mandatory photo EBT are causing people to refuse much needed benefits for their families as they fear humiliating treatment at the checkout line. One SNAP outreach partner in Massachusetts reported that a low income family headed by a parent who works as a teacher's aide declined to apply for SNAP benefits for fear she would be