



Testimony on Behalf of the Caring Families Coalition (CFC)  
Before the Human Services Committee  
January 29, 2015

**S.B. 280: (Raised) An Act Concerning the Department of Social Services**

Greetings to Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie, the Human Services Committee members and all who are present here today. My name is Maryellen Santiago, and I'm the community organizer for the Caring Families Coalition (CFC). CFC is a community organization whose purpose is to help create a health care system in Connecticut that meets the needs of all families and individuals. The members of the Coalition (CFC) and people in the community are frustrated and angry that the average call wait for the DSS benefit center is over 60 minutes long. This has been the case since the installation of the new system in July of 2013. Please listen carefully to the following information about the call center:

- Wait times for people calling are routinely over an hour. Recent wait times:
  - 64 Minutes in November 2014
  - 75 Minutes in October 2014
  - 66 Minutes in September 2014
  - 78 Minutes in August 2014
- People have to hang up before connecting to a DSS worker. Number of recent hang ups:
  - 56,579 November 2014
  - 71,685 October 2014
  - 62,722 September 2014
  - 72,639 August 2014.
- More than two thirds of people who call have to hang up before talking to a DSS worker. Percentage of recent hang ups:
  - 64% in September 2014
  - 71% in August 2014
  - 75% in July 2014.
- The continued failures of the Call Center cause serious problems for people:
  - People are wasting their limited state cell phone minutes while waiting for a worker to pick up.
  - People take time from work and personal obligations to wait over an hour for a worker to pick up the phone.
  - People are not receiving services.