



**Connecticut Conference
United Church of Christ**

125 Sherman Street
Hartford, CT 06105-6004

**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 895:
An Act Concerning Temporary Family Assistance
Submitted by, Michele Mudrick, Legislative Advocate
Connecticut Conference, United Church of Christ
February 19, 2015**

Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie, and distinguished members of the Human Services Committee,

I am Michele Mudrick, Legislative Advocate for the Connecticut Conference, United Church of Christ, and I am writing today in support of Senate Bill 895: An Act Concerning Temporary Family Assistance.

I am writing on behalf of the 240 congregations and more than 75,000 people in our state's churches. In fact, the United Church of Christ (UCC) is the largest Protestant denomination in Connecticut. Nationally, the UCC has more than 5,700 congregations with nearly 1 million members.

S.B. 895 would help create a pathway to work for poor families. This bill would "stop the clock" so that parents pursuing education and training needed to get a job can continue to get assistance while they are in school. The current time frame for benefits is twenty-one months. This is not enough time for people who need education and training to get a job. Many other states have temporary family assistance programs that are 48 and 60 months long.

The Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ supports providing a gradual reduction of benefits over a year, rather than a complete cut-off when people start working. Rather than preventing a family from receiving benefits, it would be more moral and just if they could receive two-thirds of their assistance for six months, and one-third for another six months, rather than a complete cut-off in earnings equal to the benefit amount. Furthermore, currently the program does not include childcare expenses when calculating parent's income for eligibility. Childcare for some families is expensive and cuts into the family budget, so it makes sense that childcare should be taken into consideration when calculating parent's income for eligibility.¹

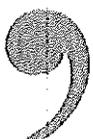
The Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ supports eliminating the "family cap" provisions, which are penalties for mothers who conceive and bear children while receiving temporary family assistance. Currently, a family in that situation receives less cash assistance for the new child and the mother does not get the one-year exemption from work requirements.²

All of God's families deserve temporary assistance when their family situation warrants it. We therefore, urge the Committee to support Senate Bill 895, an Act concerning temporary family assistance to improve the outcomes for needy families receiving assistance.

Thank you for your work and for the opportunity to supply written testimony in support of Senate Bill

¹ Legal Assistance Resource Center of Connecticut

² Legal Assistance Resource Center of Connecticut



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Blessings,
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