



**Connecticut Conference  
United Church of Christ**

125 Sherman Street  
Hartford, CT 06105-6004

**Testimony for the Appropriations Committee  
Submitted by, Michele Mudrick, Legislative Advocate  
Connecticut Conference, United Church of Christ  
February 27, 2015**

Senator Bye, Representative Walker, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee,

I am Michele Mudrick, Legislative Advocate for the Connecticut Conference, United Church of Christ and I am writing today to ask that you restore funding for the programs mentioned below. These programs help the most vulnerable populations in our state and we have a moral obligation to fund these programs.

I am writing on behalf of the 240 congregations and more than 73,000 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.

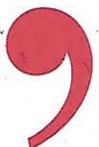
The Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ encourages you to not eliminate HUSKY A eligibility for adults (parents and caregivers) with incomes above 138% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), nor eliminate coverage under HUSKY B Band 3 for children in families with incomes over 323% of the FPL. All of God's people deserve access to affordable, quality health care. Health Care is a human right that should not be taken away.

Furthermore, we urge you not to eliminate coverage of Medicaid for pregnant women above 138% of the FPL. This would result in lack of access to maternity health care coverage for thousands of lower income residents who currently rely on Medicaid for their health care. We understand that the proposed elimination of coverage is made on the assumption that women at this income level could afford to pay for a plan in Access Health Connecticut. However, the reality is that a plan in Access Health Connecticut could be cost prohibitive. Equally disturbing, pregnancy is not a qualifying life event for special enrollment in a qualified health plan in the Affordable Care Act. If pregnant women lose access to Husky they will likely lose insurance coverage entirely without the option to enroll in Access Health Connecticut until the next open enrollment period. We further urge you not to eliminate funding for *Healthy Start*, a longstanding program that helps pregnant women and new mothers with accessing health care.

We believe that, if funding is cut, families will forego purchasing coverage or accessing care due to new co-pays and other out-of-pocket costs which are not otherwise required under HUSKY. The result will undermine the gains Connecticut has made in the last decade reducing the number of uninsured residents. This risk goes beyond the adult population: we know from national research and the experience of other New England states that when parents lose health insurance coverage their children are at risk of also becoming uninsured and not getting the care they need. In addition, newborns will lose automatic coverage that is tied to their mothers' eligibility for HUSKY A.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Connecticut Voices for Children



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We are also asking that funding be maintained on K-12 Education. The majority of the proposed cuts for this item come from capping statutory formula grants, which provide reimbursement to towns for important services such as special education and transportation. However, capping these grants may not save taxpayers money. Many of the previously state-funded services are essential, and in some cases legally required, in order to provide all children access to an adequate education; loss of state funding simply passes costs down to local taxpayers.<sup>2</sup>

The Governor's proposed budget includes a \$15.7 million cut from FY 2015 to the state's Department of Children and Families (DCF), a 1.9% reduction to existing services. The DCF budget has been falling for several years now, threatening the well-being of our state's most vulnerable children and families. Successive years of funding cuts, coupled with an increasingly complex caseload, have placed increasing strain on the agency. The state's failure to adequately invest money into DCF to improve care quality is jeopardizing the well-being of our state's most vulnerable children to whom we owe a special responsibility.<sup>3</sup>

Connecticut has an obligation to its children and families – an obligation to ensure that no child wants for basic needs, every child has access to needed healthcare, and every child receives a high quality education. This intergenerational exchange is the lifeblood of a strong society. If we renege on this debt to our children, we put them at risk for a lifetime of poverty, illness, and economic hardship, putting our state's long-term prosperity at risk. When we allow equalizing public investments in children's healthcare and education to erode, we run the risk that more children will be shut out of economic opportunity simply because of the circumstances of their birth. Unfortunately, the proposed budget asks children and the most marginalized of our residents to foot too much of the bill for the State's deficit.<sup>4</sup>

Thank you for your work and the opportunity to supply written testimony in support of restoring these vital programs in the Governor's Budget for the people that need it most in Connecticut.

Blessings,  
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<sup>2</sup> Connecticut Voices for Children

<sup>3</sup> Connecticut Voices for Children

<sup>4</sup> Connecticut Voices for Children



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