



The Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport, Inc.

Testimony of Rev. Cass L. Shaw, CEO and President, The Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport
**IN OPPOSITION TO H.B. 6824, AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING
JUNE THIRTIETH 2017, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFORE
AND OTHER PROVISIONS RELATED TO REVENUE**

March 3, 2015

My name is Cass Shaw and I am the president and CEO of The Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport, a faith-based, non-denominational, non-profit organization serving the needs of “at-risk” and “in crisis” people and families in the Greater Bridgeport area since 1945. I am writing today to speak to adjustments in the appropriations to the State Department of Education budget through the Governor’s Recommendations.

I am testifying about the elimination of the Healthy Food Certification program (HFC), which provides funds to school districts adopting CT Nutrition Standards. HFC awards participating districts an additional \$.10 per meal served; districts in turn only serve snacks that meet rigorous state standards. The incentives have enabled over 163 (86%) of eligible districts to serve healthier foods to our students. All of the school districts in the Greater Bridgeport area – Bridgeport, Fairfield, Monroe, Stratford, and Trumbull – participate.

The Governor’s recommendation to cut HFC will dramatically impact our school district’s ability to purchase higher quality food. In districts such as Bridgeport, in which over 95% are eligible for free or reduced lunch, the nutritional value of school food makes an enormous difference in the daily diets of children and youth. In addition to undermining the ability to serve healthier foods, the elimination of HFC compromises the funding of other food assistance offered by schools, such as the Summer Meals Program.

School nutrition programs across the country are underfunded, particularly in light of the influence they have on ensuring our nation’s children eat a daily, balanced diet. Connecticut, unfortunately, does less than many other states to support school meals; neighboring states such as Massachusetts, Maine, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont contribute more than Connecticut to raise the quality of foods served. Cutting HFC would serve to set Connecticut back even further in providing nutritious meals to our children.

We know that HFC is successful in helping students make better food choices. A study done by the Yale Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity demonstrated that HFC schools were better at teaching students about nutrition and serving healthier foods throughout the school building, which further resulted in students making better food choices at home.

HFC is a program that works. Every year since its inception, more Connecticut districts have signed on. With every additional school, another group of children receive healthy foods. Understandably, an economic climate such as ours requires a lean budget. However, I urge you not to eliminate a successful program that supports the well-being of our students.

Thank you.

Children’s Services
Project Learn

Youth Services
Janus Center for Youth in Crisis

Adult Services
CO-OP Center / Adult Literacy and Learning

Bridge Building

Hunger Outreach Network

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