Testimony Regarding H.B. 7169: An Act Concerning Renewal Applications for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

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Human Services Committee
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Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie, Senator Logan, Representative Case, and esteemed members of the Human Services Committee,

My name is Karen Siegel and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Connecticut Voices for Children, a research-based child advocacy organization working to ensure that all Connecticut children have an equitable opportunity to achieve their full potential.

Nearly 500,000 Connecticut residents rely on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).\(^1\) While the federal government requires certain reporting and regular interviews, it is vital that administrative barriers not prevent families from accessing the food they need to stay healthy. Evidence from TANF and attempts to impose work requirements on Medicaid and SNAP show that administrative barriers are particularly cumbersome for the low-income families served by these programs. Such families may lack access to phones or sufficient minutes, find it difficult to navigate complicated administrative processes, or may be unable to anticipate their work hours and dedicate time to standing in line or waiting on hold.\(^2\)

Large volumes of renewals can be cumbersome, but the number of SNAP recipients in Connecticut has been decreasing steadily since 2014.\(^3\) A recent brief on administrative efficiencies in work support programs suggests numerous approaches to ensuring that SNAP recipients can complete interviews when they are required. These include offering a choice of interview times, sending text reminders, and conducting on-demand interviews in person and by phone.\(^4\)

Given the recent history of long telephone wait times,\(^5\) this proposal to ensure that benefits are not denied due to administrative burdens and inefficiencies is timely. We suggest engaging with national partners to consider how best to meet federal guidelines while maximizing the chances of successful renewal for SNAP recipients who rely on this program to meet their basic needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony regarding H.B. 7169 I can be reached with any questions at kgiegel@ctvoices.org or at 203-498-4240, ext. 120.


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