

To: Senator Lesser, Representative Gilchrest, and esteemed members of the Human Services Committee

From: Peter , Member of the GHIAA Fiscal Policy Reform Team and Westminster Presbyterian Church

Date: March 16, 2026

Re: Testimony in Strong Support of SB 3 and SB 497

Dear Co-Chairs and Members of the Committee,

I am submitting this testimony as a member of the Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance (GHIAA) Fiscal Policy Reform Team. I am writing to strongly urge your support for Senate Bill 3 and Senate Bill 497. I am testifying today to advocate for the fundamental basic needs of all Connecticut residents through the lens of social justice and equal opportunity.

When we look at the federal cuts implemented under HR 1, the reality is devastating. These policy changes are aggressively targeting our most vulnerable neighbors—immigrants, Black and brown communities, and low-income households. When the federal government steps back from its obligation to care for its people, our state has a moral imperative to step in.

Protecting Healthcare Access as a Human Right (SB 3)

Healthcare is a fundamental human right, but the incoming federal changes treat it as an expendable privilege. We are looking at a scenario where thousands of legally present immigrants—including green card holders, refugees, asylees, and survivors of trafficking—are systematically being stripped of their Medicaid coverage and Access Health CT subsidies. Furthermore, the new federal income and work requirements threaten to disenroll upwards of 100,000 to 200,000 Connecticut residents from HUSKY D, often simply due to the crushing burden of bureaucratic reporting.

When our neighbors lose coverage, they are forced to delay routine care until it becomes a catastrophic, expensive emergency. This is a failure of compassion and a failure of economics; we know that investing a single dollar in preventative care saves four dollars in medical expenses down the line. SB 3 provides a vital lifeline. By establishing the Connecticut Option, creating a Basic Health Program, and seeding the Connecticut Affordable Health Care Trust Fund with \$200 million from the Federal Cuts Response Fund, we can ensure that our neighbors are not abandoned to a manufactured healthcare crisis.

Defending Basic Food Security (SB 497)

Equally critical is the defense of our community's food security. Access to sufficient, healthy food is a foundational human need. Yet, because of arbitrary federal SNAP cuts, roughly 36,000 Connecticut residents—nearly 10% of our state's beneficiaries—are facing the sudden loss of

their food assistance between late 2026 and early 2027.

These cuts punish people who already face immense systemic hurdles: unhoused individuals, young adults aging out of foster care, adults with autism, older residents, and our veterans. SB 497 is a powerful, necessary intervention. By establishing the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Transitional Benefit Program and dedicating \$40 million to seed the account, Connecticut can catch those falling through the federally created cracks. Crucially, it protects our veterans irrespective of federal work requirements, ensuring that those who served our country are never left hungry. Beyond the clear moral argument, the economic reality is undeniable: every dollar spent on SNAP generates ten to twenty dollars in economic activity and healthcare savings.

We have the resources in Connecticut to protect our residents; we simply need the political will and action! Passing SB 3 and SB 497 represents a conscious policy choice to reject austerity and invest in the dignity, health, and stability of everyone in our state.

I strongly urge the committee to favorably report both bills. Thank you for your leadership and for your time.