

PA10-026

SB137

House	1583, 1993-1995	4
Human Serv.	27, 41, [68-74], 272-274, 432, 438, 472-473	16
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**H – 1078**

**CONNECTICUT  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE**

**PROCEEDINGS  
2010**

**VOL.53  
PART 6  
1558 – 1869**

rgd/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

17  
April 27, 2010

On page 19, Calendar 385 -- oh, I'm sorry, that was page 18, Calendar 385, Substitute for Senate Bill Number 127, AN ACT CONCERNING THE ACCOUNTING SYSTEM FOR REDEEMED BEVERAGE CONTAINERS, favorable report of the Committee on Finance Revenue and Bonding.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Olson.

REP. OLSON (46th):

Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to move some items to today's consent calendar. They are Calendar Numbers 385, 388 and 389. And I move those to be added to our -- today's consent calendar. SB127 SB133  
SB137

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Without objection, so ordered.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar 95.

THE CLERK:

On page 28, Calendar 95, Substitute for House Bill Number 5220, AN ACT CONCERNING COMPETITION IN THE MOTOR FUEL INDUSTRY, favorable report of the Committee on Judiciary.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The distinguished Chair of the General Law

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**CONNECTICUT  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE**

**PROCEEDINGS  
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1870– 2219**

rgd/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

427  
April 27, 2010

THE CLERK:

House Bill 5246 as amended by House "A."

Total Number voting 144

Necessary for adoption 73

Those voting Yea 125

Those voting Nay 19

Those absent and not voting 7

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The bill as amended is passed.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar Number 285.

THE CLERK:

On page 40, Calendar 285, House Joint Resolution Number 45, RESOLUTION CONFIRMING THE DECISION OF THE CLAIMS COMMISSIONER TO DISMISS THE CLAIM AGAINST THE STATE OF WAYNE SPARKS, favorable report of the Committee on Judiciary.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Olson.

REP. OLSON (46th):

Good evening, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we are now about to vote on today's consent calendar. These are items that we moved to the consent calendar in today's session.

The items are Calendar Number 274, 277, 278, 279,

HJ7 HJ14

HJ15 HJ19

HJ27 HJ45

HJ48 SB127

SB133 SB137

rgd/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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282, 285, 286, 385, 388 and 389.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

The question before us is on passage of bills on today's consent calendar. Will you remark? Will you remark? If not, staff and guests please come to the well of the House. Members take their seats. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll call. Members to the chamber. The House is voting today's consent calendar by roll call. Members to the chamber.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Have all the members voted? Have all the members voted? Please check the roll call board to make sure your vote has been properly cast. If all the members have voted the machine will be locked. The Clerk will take a tally. The Clerk, announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

On today's consent calendar.

Total Number voting 144

Necessary for adoption 73

rgd/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

429  
April 27, 2010

Those voting Yea	144
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	7

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The consent calendar passes.

Representative Olson.

REP. OLSON (46th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to move for the immediate transmittal of all items that we acted on today, the items that are requiring further action in the Senate.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The motion is to transmit immediately to the Senate all items acted on today that need further action in the Senate. Is there objection? Is there objection? Hearing none, so ordered.

Any business on the Clerk's desk.

THE CLERK:

Mr. Speaker, a list of favorable reports on House joint resolutions.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

House Majority Leader Denise Merrill, nice to see you, Representative.

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**CONNECTICUT  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
SENATE**

**PROCEEDINGS  
2010**

**VOL. 53  
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618 - 932**

cd  
SENATE

12  
April 21, 2010

THE CHAIR:

Motion on the floor, recommit. Seeing no  
objections, so order, sir.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

On calendar page 3, also Calendar Number 80 is  
marked PR.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Continuing on calendar page 3, Calendar 391  
marked go.

Then moving to calendar page 4, Calendar 392 is  
go; Calendar 393 also go.

Continuing on calendar page 4, under favorable  
reports, Calendar Number 42 is marked PR; Calendar 43,  
PR.

Moving to calendar page 5, Calendar 47, Senate  
Bill Number 137, Mr. President, we move to place this  
item on the consent calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Without objection, sir, so ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

**S - 601**

**CONNECTICUT  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
SENATE**

**PROCEEDINGS  
2010**

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933 - 1266**

cd  
SENATE

216  
April 21, 2010

Mr. President, those items placed on the first consent calendar begin on calendar page 1, Calendar 405, House Joint Resolution Number 94; Calendar 406, House Joint Resolution Number 95.

Calendar page 2, Calendar 407, House Joint Resolution 96; Calendar 408, House Joint Resolution Number 97; Calendar 409, House Joint Resolution Number 98; Calendar 410, House Joint Resolution Number 99; Calendar 411, House Joint Resolution Number 100.

Calendar page 3, Calendar 412, House Joint Resolution 101; Calendar 391, Senate Resolution 15.

Calendar page 4, Calendar 392, Senate Joint Resolution 43.

Calendar page 5, Calendar 47, Senate Bill 137; Calendar 55, Senate Bill 148; Calendar 56, substitute for Senate Bill 150.

Calendar page 6, Calendar 66, Senate Bill 281; Calendar 71, Senate Bill 65; Calendar 74, Senate Bill 132.

Calendar page 7, Calendar 87, Senate Bill 184; Calendar 90, Senate Bill 255.

Calendar page 8, Calendar 94, substitute for Senate Bill 133; Calendar 97, substitute for Senate Bill 310; Calendar 103, substitute for Senate Bill 43.

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SENATE

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April 21, 2010

Calendar page 9, Calendar 117, Senate Bill 232.

Calendar page 10, Calendar 119, substitute for  
Senate Bill 261; Calendar 124, substitute for Senate  
Bill 251.

Calendar page 11, Calendar 149, Senate Bill 244.

Calendar page 12, Calendar 161, substitute for  
Senate Bill 258.

Calendar page 13, Calendar 180, substitute for  
Senate Bill 152.

Calendar page 14, Calendar 216, substitute for  
Senate Bill 256; Calendar 217, substitute for Senate  
Bill 201; Calendar 222, substitute for Senate Bill  
275.

Calendar page 15, Calendar Number 233, Senate  
Bill Number 97.

Calendar Number -- page 16, Calendar 239, Senate  
Bill 105.

Calendar page 17, Calendar 270, substitute for  
Senate Bill 234.

Calendar page 18, Calendar 296, substitute for  
House Bill 5138; Calendar 297, substitute for House  
Bill 5219; Calendar 298, House Bill 5250.

Calendar page 19, Calendar 301, House Bill 5263;  
Calendar 302, House Bill 5292; Calendar 303, House

cd  
SENATE

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April 21, 2010

Bill 5265; Calendar 313, substitute for House Bill  
5002.

Calendar page 20, Calendar 314, House Bill 5201.

Calendar page 24, Calendar 340, substitute for  
Senate Bill 175.

Calendar page 25, Calendar 346, substitute for  
Senate Bill 151; Calendar 350, Senate Bill 333;  
Calendar 371, substitute for House Bill 5014.

Calendar page 26, Calendar 375, House Bill 5320.

Calendar page 27, Calendar 379, substitute for  
House Bill 5278; Calendar 380, substitute for House  
Bill 5452; Calendar 381, substitute for House Bill  
5006; Calendar 382, House Bill 5157.

Calendar page 28, Calendar 384, substitute for  
House Bill 5204.

Calendar page 29, Calendar 395, substitute for  
Senate Bill 127; Calendar 396, Senate Bill 147.

Calendar page 30, Calendar 413, House Bill 5024;  
Calendar 414, substitute for House Bill 5401.

Calendar page 31, Calendar 419, substitute for  
House Bill 5303.

Calendar 32 -- page 32, Calendar Number 421,  
substitute for House Bill 5388; and on calendar page  
34, Calendar 46, substitute for Senate Bill 68;

cd  
SENATE

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Calendar 50, substitute for Senate Bill 17.

Calendar page 35, Calendar 64, substitute for  
Senate Bill 187.

Calendar page 37, Calendar 109, substitute for  
Senate Bill 189.

Calendar page 39, Calendar Number 148, substitute  
for Senate Bill 226.

Calendar page 40, Calendar 182, substitute for  
Senate Bill 218.

Calendar page 41, Calendar 188, substitute for  
Senate Bill 200.

Mr. President, that completes those items placed  
on the consent calendar.

THE CHAIR:

All right. If the Clerk has made an announcement  
that a roll call vote is in progress in the Senate on  
the first consent calendar, the machine will be open.  
Senators may cast their vote.

THE CLERK:

The Senate is now voting by roll call on the  
consent calendar. Will all Senators please return to  
the chamber. The Senate is now voting by roll call on  
the consent calendar. Will all Senators please return  
to the chamber.

cd  
SENATE

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April 21, 2010

THE CHAIR:

Would all Senators please check the roll call board to make certain that your vote is properly recorded. If all Senators have voted and if all votes are properly recorded, the machine will be locked, and the Clerk may take a tally.

THE CLERK:

Motion is on adoption of Consent Calendar Number 1.

Total Number Voting	35
Those voting Yea	35
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	1

THE CHAIR:

Consent Calendar Number 1 is passed.

Are there any announcements or points of personal privilege? Are there any announcements or points of personal privilege?

Senator LeBeau.

SENATOR LEBEAU:

Thank you, Mr. President, for a -- for an announcement.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

**JOINT  
STANDING  
COMMITTEE  
HEARINGS**

**HUMAN  
SERVICES  
PART 1  
1 – 352**

**2010**

MICKEY KRAMER: Thank you.

SENATOR DOYLE: Okay. I'm going to try to get a special needs person. Is William Acosta here? Is William here? No. Okay. Mark Buri. Barbara Albert. Okay. I'll go to Commissioner Starkowski, then, DSS. Reporting for duty.

COMMISSIONER MICHAEL STARKOWSKI: Good morning, Senator Doyle, Representative Walker and members of the Human Services Committee. I'm Michael Starkowski. I'm the Commissioner of the Department of Social Services.

I'm pleased to be here this morning to represent, to present testimony on legislation introduced at the request of Governor Rell implementing features of the Governor's recommended mid-term budget adjustments.

I'm also happy to have this opportunity to testify on the merits of legislation introduced at the request of the Department and would like to thank you for raising these bills.

As we indicated in our testimony before the Appropriations Committee in support of Governor Rell's budget recommendations, these are extraordinary times of economic adversity.

During the continuing fiscal crisis in Connecticut state government, it is inevitable that the agency with the largest general fund budget will be under tremendous pressure to control expenditures and in fact reduce expenditures where feasible.

This reality is evident in the Governor's mid-term adjustments just as it was reflected in the budget adopted by the members of this General Assembly in September for the first year of the biennium.

SB32SB66SB68SB67SB139HB5068HB5145SB137

Office of Policy and Management. We'll consult with the other state agencies if it's appropriate.

So we feel we already have a process in place that ensures that we review the opportunities for any additional federal money and we think having another process in place, again, will be an administrative burden on the Department.

AN ACT CONCERNING THE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSIONER'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TECHNICAL REVISIONS TO THE HUMAN SERVICES STATUTES. Again, these are purely technical revisions, and that's where we end my part of the testimony.

SB137

I'm here to answer questions. I have staff with me if you have any questions, and thank you for this opportunity.

SENATOR DOYLE: Thank you, Commissioner. Any questions? Representative Gibbons.

REP. GIBBONS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, Mr. Starkowski, or Commissioner Starkowski. It's always a pleasure to see you.

COMMISSIONER MICHAEL STARKOWSKI: Good morning.

REP. GIBBONS: You mentioned earlier in the program, certainly under HUSKY A and the pharmacy benefits and some of the benefits that we give our Connecticut clients are substantially higher than what are offered by other states.

SB32

Could we have a list of those just so we could compare them please, so that we know where we stand --

COMMISSIONER MICHAEL STARKOWSKI: Yes. Yes.

REP. JARMOC: Even though it's a pretty, HUSKY as you know is a very large complicated program.

COMMISSIONER MICHAEL STARKOWSKI: Understood.

REP. JARMOC: Okay. All right. Thank you very much.

SENATOR DOYLE: Thank you. Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, well, almost afternoon, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER MICHAEL STARKOWSKI: Good afternoon.

SENATOR KANE: I think in your testimony and in some of your discussion with Representative Lyddy you were talking about how we are a generous state when it comes to a lot of these services. Is that correct?

COMMISSIONER MICHAEL STARKOWSKI: That's right. Yes, sir.

SENATOR KANE: And we're not the only state going through this budget crisis as we all know, this deficit that we have, which is now creeping over \$500 million.

What are other states doing in regard to these same type of programs. I've got to believe that we're not the only one making these type of proposals here today. There has to be others that are doing likewise.

COMMISSIONER MICHAEL STARKOWSKI: We're not. I mean, if you can give me a couple of seconds --

SENATOR KANE: Sure.

[SB32]

[SB66]

[SB68]

[SB67]

[SB139]

[HB5068]

[HB5145]

[SB137]

COMMISSIONER MICHAEL STARKOWSKI: -- I actually have some information on the other states. Some of the other states have taken some very dramatic and more drastic measure than we are. They're eliminating programs. They're cutting benefits back. They're cutting eligibility back.

You know, when the stimulus money came out from the federal government, it restricted states from modifying their eligibility for programs in making it more restrictive than it already is, while you're accepting the stimulus dollars.

But with the stimulus dollars coming near the end, a number of states are proposing to change some eligibility criteria and make their programs more restrictive in order to save dollars.

SENATOR KANE: Yeah, I think that's what you talked about earlier, about our eligibility requirements. They do differ from other states. Is that right?

COMMISSIONER MICHAEL STARKOWSKI: That's right. That's right. We're at 185 percent of the federal poverty level in our HUSKY program, which is for children and parents of those children where a number of states are at 100 percent, literally, 100 percent of the federal poverty level.

SENATOR KANE: Where does that put us on the bell curve?

COMMISSIONER MICHAEL STARKOWSKI: At the top of the curve. And we've been there for a number of years.

SENATOR KANE: You also mentioned in regards to that about going to comparisons between states. Is

it possible, do we have statistics that show residents from other states come to our state for just such those type of services that we offer? Is that possible? Does that make sense?

COMMISSIONER MICHAEL STARKOWSKI: You know, I don't think we track that information. You know, anecdotally we've heard for years that people come to Connecticut because our benefit packages are generous, because our eligibility is generous.

But we don't, you know, we can't verify that that's the only reason they come to the State of Connecticut. There's a lot of other reasons they come to the State of Connecticut.

SENATOR KANE: Do you think that's possible?

COMMISSIONER MICHAEL STARKOWSKI: It's possible, but you know, I think it's going to be tough to actually determine that that's the only reason they came to Connecticut, and I think it's going to be difficult for anyone to have a client come in and say the only reason I came to Connecticut is because of the HUSKY program.

SENATOR KANE: Yeah, no, of course not. But I'm assuming that there would be records of that individual from the previous state that showed that they were on these same programs, possibly, you know.

COMMISSIONER MICHAEL STARKOWSKI: Yeah. We can get information to show when people came to the State of Connecticut and were they on similar programs in other states. We can try to gather some of that information.

SENATOR KANE: Is there maybe a question that could be on the application process or something like

that, that, you know, have you used other services in other states or things like that? Maybe is that possible? Does that make sense?

COMMISSIONER MICHAEL STARKOWSKI: Well, it's possible; but I think it's going to be difficult to add, literally add another question on there, but we can try to find the information out (inaudible). We can try to put something together.

SENATOR KANE: Well, I don't know if you do have that information we were talking about but --

COMMISSIONER MICHAEL STARKOWSKI: Yes, we do.

SENATOR KANE: Okay. I'd be curious to hear how other states re reacting to these similar budget crises.

COMMISSIONER MICHAEL STARKOWSKI: Arizona is eliminating their state's health insurance program called Kid Care, which covers 47,000 kids.

They're repealing Medicaid coverage for 310,000 childless adults.

California has a reduction in the social supplemental security income by \$15, elimination of (inaudible), a program that's associated with their TFA population.

Rhode Island eliminated healthcare for 1,000 low-income parents.

Minnesota has been a very liberal healthcare state. Minnesota is cancelling a health insurance program for 29,500 low-income adults.

Texas has frozen its enrollment in the state's children's health insurance program.

And a number of other states have made deep cuts in their mental health services, in their temporary insurance and on and on and on.

SENATOR KANE: So we're not alone, obviously.

COMMISSIONER MICHAEL STARKOWSKI: Oh no, we're not alone. I mean, every state is looking at where could they reduce their (inaudible) in their expenditures.

SENATOR KANE: Thank you.

SENATOR DOYLE: Thank you. Representative Walker.

REP. WALKER: Good morning, sir, still.

COMMISSIONER MICHAEL STARKOWSKI: Still good morning, okay.

REP. WALKER: Still good morning. I just want to continue a little bit with what Senator Kane was asking you just a little while ago, just a little bit more.

COMMISSIONER MICHAEL STARKOWSKI: Okay.

REP. WALKER: Is it not true though that the cost of living, we are one of the highest cost of living states in this country?

COMMISSIONER MICHAEL STARKOWSKI: It is true.

REP. WALKER: And so therefore, a lot of the reasons why, possibly why we have raised our federal poverty level a little higher than other states like let's say Mississippi, is because the cost of living down there is a much, is at a different rate than what it is up here?

COMMISSIONER MICHAEL STARKOWSKI: Representative Walker, I'm sure that the eligibility is a recognition of the standard of living in Connecticut.

REP. WALKER: I mean, if we had the economic standards of some of those states that you talked about, I'm sure we'd love to lower our requirements, because then people would be able to afford their quality of life, so therefore it would be something that all of us would like to do, especially a lot of the states that you mentioned are county government states and they have different ways of funding things.

In Connecticut we have 169 towns that require those funding sources, so it makes it a whole, it makes it a little bit different in trying to figure out who pays for what and how these services, because I believe in one of the programs you talked about in Missouri, I believe that program is being picked up by the county that program is being eliminated.

So I think it's hard to compare apples to apples when you don't have all of those services. So I want to (inaudible) Connecticut. Connecticut's a good state to start with.

COMMISSIONER MICHAEL STARKOWSKI: It is, Representative Walker, but understand, I mean, we were at 150 percent of the federal poverty level in HUSKY for a long time and when we had surpluses, we raised it to 185 percent of federal poverty level.

I'm not passing judgment on it. I'm just saying we did it.

REP. WALKER: Well, I think that Connecticut understands the value of healthcare, and how

important it is. Just like the hard question that I think a lot of us have up here is understanding why we would support, why we support getting the eyeglass, I mean the vision exam but not getting the glasses, because if they can't see they can't work or they can't have a livelihood. So we have some, a little, a few differences on some of these things.

COMMISSIONER MICHAEL STARKOWSKI: Okay.

REP. WALKER: I wanted to ask about the elimination of the HUSKY plus benefits. Can you explain to me what that is because in going on the, it goes between 185 percent and 300 percent of poverty level for those people that qualify for that benefit.

SB32

And I think just for everybody's edification, when we talk about 150, 185 percent to 300 percent of poverty, that's someone making \$43,000 to someone making \$54,000 for a family of four.

COMMISSIONER MICHAEL STARKOWSKI: That's good.

REP. WALKER: I do my homework a little bit. So when we talk about these things, we have to make sure that we understand all of those things that are involved in that.

So when we eliminate the HUSKY plus benefits, what are we exactly eliminating and to whom?

COMMISSIONER MICHAEL STARKOWSKI: I don't think it's really an elimination of the benefit.

REP. WALKER: Okay.

COMMISSIONER MICHAEL STARKOWSKI: When we talk about moving from the managed care organization to an ASO, to an administrative services

So I would just say in closing that please do not let this fear be the future of so many people, and it could cost our state budget more for treatment later than could have been prevented now. It could also save lives. Any questions?

SENATOR DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Fischer. Any questions from the committee members? Seeing none, thank you very much for waiting. The next speaker is Nancy Carrington, and then we have Gretchen Vivian, or Vivier, I'm sorry and Sandra Carbonari.

LUCY NOLAN: Good afternoon. My name is Lucy Nolan. I'm with End Hunger Connecticut. I'm speaking for Nancy Carrington and also for Chris O'Rourke, if that's all right. They had to leave. Thank you. Yes, two for one.

They wanted to speak to Senate Bill 137, which are technical revisions to the Human Services statutes. I may be the first person to even speak to that today.

If you have Nancy's testimony you'll see that 22 years ago when the piece in there, it's Section 5, Section 5, 17(b) speaks to soup kitchens, the Commodity Nutrition Assistance Program, which is protein food that the food banks, that Connecticut Food Bank gets, shares it with Food Share to give out to soup kitchens and food pantries.

And that's really the only food they get a list of things that they can pick and choose, and it's really the only food that food pantries get to pick and choose. The state has put some, has consistently given them about the same amount of money. There was a little cut last year.

But when they wrote the legislation 22 years ago, it said that the shelters shall pay a handling fee charge of five cents per pound, which was then the acceptable amount of money. It says shall. They don't have to. The food banks don't often even charge them that much.

But what they're asking is if we can, if you can change the language to say that no more, shall charge no more than the generally accepted food bank handling fees not to exceed the national cap, which is set by Feeding America, which is a national food banking organization and they have a cap.

And so this is just asking in case they need to. They also, it gives them some flexibility in what they can charge. They often, Food Share uses sometimes incentive, uses this as an incentive, like we can charge you a little less. if you have an open pantry, so that kind of thing.

So really, that's what they're here, what they're asking for and you have their testimony.

SENATOR DOYLE: Yes. We just found it. Thank you.

LUCY NOLAN: Okay.

SENATOR DOYLE: Any questions from committee members? Representative Walker.

REP. WALKER: So basically you're saying that everything else in the technical bill is fine except just that little part.

LUCY NOLAN: Yes.

REP. WALKER: Okay, thank you.

LUCY NOLAN: Yes.

SENATOR DOYLE: Thank you.

LUCKY NOLAN: Okay, thank you.

SENATOR DOYLE: Any other committee members? Seeing none, the next speaker is Gretchen Vivier. Is Gretchen here? No, she isn't.

The next speaker is Sandi Carbonari. Is Sandi here? Is Marghie Giuliano? She's here. After Marghie is George Smiles and Wilson Tirado.

MARGHERITA GIULIANO: Good afternoon, Senator Doyle, Representative Walker and members of the committee. My name is Marghie Giuliano and I'm Executive Vice-President of the Connecticut Pharmacists Association.

I'm here today to address Raised Bill 68 and Bill Number 32, the Governor's cut. Actually, many of the advocates who have gone before me have done a wonderful job explaining how devastating the cuts will be, not only to the patients that we serve but to our pharmacists as well.

As you're all well aware, pharmacists have worked with DSS and the State Legislature for at least 20 years helping to find ways for the state to save money in their DSS budget.

Last year alone, members of my organization brought forth \$40 million in savings and of course, none of our pharmacists received any of the benefit of those savings. Instead, they had their dispensing fee cut and AWP et cetera.

Today, I really am not going to go through the different cuts. We've heard them. But I really want to focus on a few different issues.

**JOINT  
STANDING  
COMMITTEE  
HEARINGS**

**HUMAN  
SERVICES  
PART 2  
353 – 704**

**2010**



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*Testimony before the Human Services Committee*

*Michael P. Starkowski*

*Commissioner*

*February 23, 2010*

Good morning, Senator Doyle, Representative Walker and Members of the Human Services Committee. I am Michael Starkowski, Commissioner of the Department of Social Services. I am pleased to be here this morning to present testimony on legislation introduced at the request of Governor Rell implementing features of the recommended mid-term budget adjustments. I am also happy to have this opportunity to testify on the merits of legislation introduced at the request of the department and would like to thank the committee for raising these bills.

As we indicated in our testimony before the Appropriations Committee in support of Governor Rell's budget recommendation for the Department of Social Services, these are extraordinary times of economic adversity. During the continuing fiscal crisis in Connecticut state government, it is inevitable that the agency with the largest General Fund budget will be under tremendous pressure to control expenditures, and, in fact, reduce expenditures where feasible. This reality is evident in the Governor's midterm adjustments, just as it was reflected in the budget adopted by the members of this General Assembly in September for the first year of the biennium.

*Legislation to Implement the Governor's Recommended Mid-term Budget Adjustments*

**S. B. No. 32 AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING SOCIAL SERVICES.**

**HUSKY A**

The HUSKY A program currently provides no-cost healthcare to low- and moderate-income children and families. In SFY 2010, the HUSKY A program has experienced substantial increases in enrollment. Over the first 7 months of SFY 2010, enrollment in the HUSKY A program has increased by approximately 14,660 clients, or an average of 2,094 clients per month for a total enrollment as of January 1, 2010, of over 357,000 clients; and a projected enrollment by the end of SFY 2010 of 368,000 clients.

The biennial budget included a full-year reduction to managed care rates of 6%, which is essentially asking the managed care organizations (MCOs) to operate at a significant loss, based upon current financial reports. The department is currently in negotiations with the MCOs pertaining to changes in program scope, contract terms and capitation rates. While the biennial budget included rate reductions to the MCOs, the mid-term budget recommends converting HUSKY to a non-risk model with the HUSKY program continuing under an administrative services organization structure. This ASO structure

SB 66

SB 68

SB 67

SB 139

HB 5068

HB 5145

SB 137

numbers one or two each year, sometimes none.—The Department implements SPAs in order to comply with federal law, implement rate changes, and to implement statutorily required programs and program changes under Medicaid.

It is critical the department maintain flexibility in the timing of the submission of state plan amendments because once an amendment is filed with the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the amendment, if approved, is effective retroactive to the beginning of the quarter in which it is filed. This can mean the difference in three months of federal match, program eligibility for clients or compliance with federal or state law.

Public Act 09-05 of the September Special Session imposed the requirement that the Department notify the Appropriations and Human Services Committees of SPAs before they are filed. This requirement only just recently became effective and provides information to the committees of cognizance without presenting an impediment to the department's timely filing of SPAs. Additionally, it has been our longstanding practice to publish SPAs in the Connecticut Law Journal or in Connecticut newspapers and comments are typically received and addressed prior to submission to CMS or in the course of CMS review. There have been few if any complaints about this process from the public, which raises questions as to why additional legislative scrutiny would be required.

**H. B. No. 5145 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING AN INCREASE IN THE AMOUNT OF FEDERAL FUNDS RECEIVED BY STATE AGENCIES.**

The department has already taken steps to track federal grant opportunities and notify program staff of their availability. I have designated a staff member within the Commissioner's Office to check federal grant announcements on a daily basis. When it is determined that DSS may be an eligible applicant, the announcement is sent to program staff for evaluation. Program staff are expected to determine if we are eligible and report back on actions taken or reasons why we cannot pursue. These comments are sent to the Commissioner, who makes the final decision on whether or not apply for these federal funding opportunities. The Commissioner will consult with the OPM and any other appropriate state agencies when making the final determination.

The tracking report (described above) that has been created encompasses most of the reporting requirements contemplated in this bill.

While this may place an additional administrative burden on the Department, we are anticipating that we can absorb this within our available resources.

**S. B. No. 137 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSIONERS' RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TECHNICAL REVISIONS TO THE HUMAN SERVICES STATUTES.**

The provisions of the bill are purely technical and supported by the department.



**A Member of America's Second Harvest**  
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**Testimony before the Human Services Committee**  
Connecticut General Assembly  
February 23, 2010

Presented by:  
Christine O'Rourke  
Executive Vice President and COO, Foodshare

Good afternoon. My name is Christine O'Rourke. I am the Executive Vice President at Foodshare and am here representing our CEO, Gloria McAdam, who could not be with you today. As you may know Foodshare is the regional food bank serving the greater Hartford area.

I welcome this opportunity to comment on SB 137, the Commodities Assistance Program, how it supports the work of our local community food pantries, and how we could make the program work more effectively.

It's important that we look at the big picture. Hunger is a problem throughout Connecticut. There is now at least one private agency providing food to people in need in every town in the greater Hartford region, where Foodshare distributed over 12 million pounds of food last year. In the current economy, demand at local food pantries was up by 20% last year over the year before.

The Commodities Assistance Program is particularly important to the work to feed hungry families, as it provides a stable base of high nutrition foods, supplementing the donated foods that Foodshare solicits from the food industry.

Foodshare supports the proposed change in the language of SB 137 that would allow the food banks to collect a higher handling fee for this product. This program was created in 1988 and the handling fee was capped at five cents per pound at that time. Since then the costs of labor, transportation and storage have risen significantly, forcing food banks to use other funding to underwrite the administrative costs of this program. An increase in the allowed handling fee would allow Foodshare to put these funds to better use providing more food through private efforts.

It's important to note that raising the cap does not automatically mean that Foodshare would charge the maximum handling fee. This is because Foodshare makes every effort to keep the costs low to the food pantries and community kitchens we serve through grants and other incentives. Raising the cap on the handling fee for this program would allow us to charge more if the circumstances made it necessary to do so.

Thank you.



Speaker was  
Lucy Nolan  
T40

**SB 137-AN ACT CONCERNING THE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSIONERS' RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TECHNICAL REVISIONS TO THE HUMAN SERVICES STATUTES**

February 23, 2010

Good morning. My name is Nancy Carrington and I am CEO of Connecticut Food Bank, the largest centralized source of donated emergency food in Connecticut. Connecticut Food Bank serves 650 food-assistance programs in six of Connecticut's eight counties: Fairfield, Litchfield, Middlesex, New Haven, New London and Windham. Foodshare serves Hartford and Tolland counties. Food-assistance programs include food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, and child and adult day programs for low-income people.

I am here to seek a language change to the supplemental nutrition commodities program through the Department of Social Services. This program, contractually managed by Connecticut Food Bank, uses state funds to purchase food of high nutritional value for emergency programs throughout Connecticut's eight counties. Programs are given a dollar allocation and a list of items to order from. This is one of very few options that programs have to order what their agency specifically needs.

The language from the original statute allows for a reimbursement of five cents per pound to cover some overhead costs. I would like to amend the language on the statute to reflect current needs of Connecticut Food Bank and Foodshare. When the bill was originally written 22 years ago, five cents was the generally accepted food bank handling fee. That fee is designated and capped by Feeding America, the national food bank network of which Connecticut Food Bank and Foodshare are members. I would like the language to be amended to reflect a periodically modified handling fee that cannot exceed the national standard.

As currently considered:

Sec. 5. Section 17b-791 of the 2010 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

... Such soup kitchens, food pantries and emergency shelters shall pay a handling charge [of five cents per pound] no more than the generally accepted food bank handling fees not to exceed the national cap in order to cover the costs incurred by the Connecticut Food Bank.

This change of language would keep with the original concept. The original statute as written in 1988 reflected the national handling fee. Also, the amended language will give the food banks flexibility and provide additional funds necessary to get the food to as many places as possible. The fees help defray the costs of warehousing the food, selecting orders and delivering the food across the state. Connecticut Food Bank and Foodshare use grants and other fundraising efforts to cover the remaining cost of distributing food statewide.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

**Connecticut Food Bank**

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