



Southern New England Conference

United Church of Christ

Living the Love & Justice of Jesus

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Testimony in Support of House Bill 5310: An Act Eliminating State Recovery of Public Assistance Except As Required Under Federal Law

**Submitted by, Michele Mudrick, Legislative Advocate
Southern New England Conference United Church of Christ
March 4, 2020**

Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie, and distinguished members of the Human Services Committee,

I am Michele Mudrick, Legislative Advocate for the Southern New England Conference United Church of Christ and I am writing today in support of House Bill 5310: An Act Eliminating State Recovery of Public Assistance Except as Required Under Federal Law.

I am writing on behalf of the 614 congregations and more than 120,000 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. In 1999 the assembled delegates and ministers of the historic Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ met and voted on a Resolution that called upon the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ to encourage local churches to focus attention on issues of poverty and wealth and our responsibility to advocate for the poor.

It is not moral to require welfare recipients to pay the state back for the financial assistance they have received and treat welfare as a loan. Connecticut is one of only two states in the country that still does this and I am writing today to ask for this to stop.

The state requires a lien on a recipient's assets, and demands repayment when a person sells or refinances a home, or receives a legal settlement, for example for a personal injury, receives an inheritance or dies and attempts to leave any inheritance to heirs. This effect is to push recipients, or their heirs, back into poverty.

Connecticut could do better, as 48 other states already have, and repeal welfare liens.

Thank you for your work and the opportunity to supply written testimony in support of House bill 5310.

Blessings,
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