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State of Connecticut
SENATE

SENATE REPUBLICAN WHIP

MEMBER

EDUCATION COMMITTEE
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JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

February 19, 2020

Co-Chairs Sen. Osten and Rep. Walker, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee,

I am State Senator Gennaro Bizzarro and am testifying in regard to **H.B. No. 5005 AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2021.**

I am requesting that a portion of the state Department of Social Services (DSS) funding allotted for the 2020 Census be used for outreach advertisements in Polish and Spanish.

I cannot overstate the importance of this outreach to these communities in a city like New Britain.

For example, Polish Americans make up nearly 10% of Connecticut's population.

In places like New Britain, designated as 'hard to count', that percentage is much, much higher: probably double.

This outreach will help us to make sure everyone gets counted in New Britain.

Counting everyone in the state is critical because \$10.7 billion in federal funds are riding on that count.

For every person we miss, we lose \$2,900. There are a lot of federal programs that are important to New Britain and to the state that are at stake: Medicaid, Head Start, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), federal school lunch programs, transportation and highway protection grants, to name just a few.

In cities like New Britain, we celebrate our diversity. With that diversity comes challenges and language barriers. That's why getting an accurate Census count throughout New Britain must be a team effort. That effort has been led by Lt. Gov. Susan Bysiewicz, Mayor Erin Stewart, Registrar of Voters and former Mayor Lucian Pawlak, New Britain Public Library Director Pat Rutkowski, Chairman of New Britain Latino Coalition Carmelo Rodriguez, grassroots organizations, the Chamber of Commerce, NAACP, faith-based organizations, and the League of Woman Voters.

As Paulette Fox, Executive Director of Opportunities Industrialization Center of New Britain, noted, an accurate Census count is 'imperative if you want nonprofits to continue, because we use the information to fill out grants. This is about survival.'

There is so much at stake. A comprehensive outreach effort which engages the Polish and Spanish-speaking residents of New Britain is just common sense. It makes a great deal of financial sense, too.

I appreciate the Appropriations Committee's attention to this crucial issue and I thank my fellow legislators for their consideration of this request. I know I speak for the entire New Britain team when I say, 'We love our city. We believe in our city. And we want to do all we can to get an accurate Census count so that our city and its people can continue to thrive.'

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