



CAFCA

Connecticut Association
for Community Action

March 6, 2020 Public Hearing Testimony before the Connecticut General Assembly's Public Health Committee

In Support of

Senate Bill 248: An Act Concerning Access to Identity Documents by Homeless Youth and Young Adults

Board of Directors

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Access Community
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TEAM, Inc.

Distinguished Chairpersons, Vice-Chairpersons, Ranking Members, and Members, my name is Deb Polun and I am the new Executive Director of the Connecticut Association for Community Action (CAFCA), the state association that works with Connecticut's nine Community Action Agencies (CAAs), the state and federal designated antipoverty agencies.

Community Action Agencies work with over 259,000 low- and moderate-income people across the state each year – including your constituents – and connect them to services like energy assistance, job training, child care, Meals on Wheels, SNAP, and housing. Last year, CAAs helped 1,706 people obtain safe and affordable housing; 1,666 people experiencing homelessness obtained safe, temporary shelter; and 602 households avoided eviction.

CAFCA strongly supports Senate Bill 248: *An Act Concerning Access to Identity Documents by Homeless Youth and Young Adults*.

Very simply, this bill makes it easier for young people experiencing homelessness to obtain their birth certificate, by removing the issuance fee for “certified homeless individuals” aged 18-24.

As we all know, birth certificates can be a vital form of identification for people opening bank accounts, applying for jobs, and getting into stable housing. The fee for accessing birth certificates (\$30 if obtaining it from the State Department of Public Health, and \$20 if from a person's town of birth) can be a barrier for low-income people.

This proposal is a small, but impactful way that our State can help young individuals who are trying to improve their lives. Thank you for your time and consideration.