



DATE: February 19, 2019
TO: Human Services Committee
FROM: Jeff Shaw, Senior Director of Public Policy & Advocacy, The Alliance
RE: H.B. No. 7094, An Act Concerning Temporary Family Assistance

Good morning Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie, Senator Logan, Representative Case and members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is Jeff Shaw, Senior Director of Public Policy & Advocacy, of the CT Community Nonprofit Alliance (The Alliance). The Alliance is the statewide advocacy organization representing nonprofits, with a membership of more than 300 community organizations and associations. Nonprofits deliver essential services to more than half a million people each year and employ almost 14% of Connecticut's workforce.

The Alliance supports H.B. No. 7094, An Act Concerning Temporary Family Assistance. The proposed legislation provides parents receiving temporary family assistance an additional thirty dollars in monthly benefits (\$360 annually) per child under the age of three to purchase diapers.

Diapers are an essential item for raising a child, yet the reality is that they are unaffordable for many low-income families. Diapering a child now takes about \$1,000 a year for an average product. For families on the brink of poverty, diapering a child can pose a serious financial burden. For a single parent working full time at minimum wage, the cost of diapers can total as much as 6% of their total annual pay. For the lowest-income parents, diapers can account for as much as 14% of a parent's annual pay.

Without access to enough diapers, children's health is at risk due to the higher likelihood for hives, diaper rash, illness or infection.

Parents are also impacted financially, in the cost of potential medical care or needing time off from work to care for their child, but also emotionally, due to the stress of a constantly crying or sick child and using much of their money on the purchase of diapers. A 2013 study by the Yale Child Study Center found that diaper need impacts parents too: poor mental health is significantly associated with being unable to get an adequate supply of diapers.

No parent should be forced to choose between buying diapers and paying for food, rent or utilities. Community nonprofits that provide basic human need services are working with the business community towards addressing this problem. As an example, The Diaper Bank of Connecticut partners with over fifty community organizations to distribute 3,000-10,000 diapers per month through fund-raising and in-kind diaper donations. Major diaper brands donate diapers regularly. Unfortunately, these efforts still fall short of the estimated need of 50,000 additional diapers per month.

This legislation would improve the quality of life and well-being of thousands of parents, caregivers and children under the age of three. Please support H.B. 7094.

Thank you for your time and consideration.