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Public Hearing Testimony before the  
Connecticut General Assembly Finance, Revenue & Bonding Committee

Deb Polun, Executive Director  
Connecticut Association for Community Action, Inc. (CAFCA)

***In support of Senate Bill 464: An Act Concerning  
the Failure to File for Certain Grand List Exemptions***

March 25, 2022

Distinguished members of the Finance, Revenue & Bonding Committee:

Thank you for holding this public hearing to gather information from the public. The Connecticut Association for Community Action (CAFCA) is the state association that works with Connecticut's nine Community Action Agencies (CAAs), the state and federally designated anti-poverty agencies serving nearly 200,000 low- and moderate-income people in all 169 cities and towns across the state.

I am writing to express our support for Section 1 of Senate Bill 464, *An Act Concerning the Failure to File for Certain Grand List Exemptions*.

CAFCA is a small nonprofit organization, with four full-time employees. We provide training, technical assistance, and other programming to help Connecticut's Community Action Agencies better serve low-income people across the state. We help them maximize their funding, provide better/more robust resources to people in need, connect with other agencies, advocate for their customers' needs, and plan for the future.

Until the summer of 2018, we were co-located with one of our member agencies. In July, 2018 – prior to my coming on board with the organization – CAFCA signed a five-year lease at 300 Plaza Middlesex in Middletown. This was the first time in CAFCA's 40+ year history that it had its own office space, among other independent functions.

Shortly after its move, CAFCA underwent a leadership transition, and I was hired as Executive Director in June, 2019. Unfortunately, during the move and leadership transition, CAFCA did not file appropriate paperwork with the

City of Middletown, to alert the City to our nonprofit status. We therefore accumulated owed property taxes (which we paid, so as to stop accruing interest).

Last year, the Legislature worked to rectify this situation for CAFCA, by passing PA 21-201. However, the City Assessor's office let us know that a small drafting error prevented the City from approving our application for exemption and returning the funds we had paid.

We are grateful for this Committee and the leadership of State Senator Matt Lesser for raising this bill again this year, to help us get this fixed. As a small nonprofit, we contribute to our community in many ways – but of course, our funds are stretched. We want to do everything we can to ensure that we are a good neighbor in the City of Middletown, while also meeting the needs of our member agencies – and ultimately, the 200,000 low-income people they serve each year.

In closing, I strongly urge you to support section 1 of SB 464. Thank you for raising this important bill and for your time and consideration. Please feel free to get in touch with any questions: [deb@cafca.org](mailto:deb@cafca.org) or 860-832-9438.