

Oral Testimony given by Debra Thompson
The Illinois Commission on the Elimination of Poverty Public Hearing
31 August

The re-structuring of established programs has not worked in the past due to lack of support and funding. Why will it work this time? Why is this not just another exercise in futility?

We need short-term action plans that measurably affect the community NOW. If the plan does not work in 6 months, then do something else. People need “NOW ACTION” not let’s wait and see in 2-5 years. We need to focus on the here and now; we need to stop supporting other nations while we suffer. When was the last time you or anybody in this room picked up an item with a “Made in the USA Stamp” on it?

Illinois has raised business taxes, which opened the flood gates for other states to woo our businesses as if they were college students bound for NBA stardom. We are losing our revenue streams to neighboring states, and compromising the human rights of other nations to keep production costs down. Is this the legacy we want to leave?

Millions of dollars worth of good food are trashed daily. What a waste! Here is a plan: how about letting restaurants and grocery stores distribute that food to community shelters and food pantries. We need to start thinking in small steps before taking on massive program restructuring that leads us so far down one path that it takes us years to recover and regroup.

I urge the Commission to consider more agile methods to achieving our goals.