

Good afternoon Senators, my name is Margaret Neal and I am testifying today in support of SB 703 because the way the current system works is wrong.

As a single mother and sole provider for my family, I lived this reality for years with my two children – my son Maurtice, who has special needs, and my daughter Brittney.

After leaving recovery and trying to establish my career, I got on TCA so I could provide for my family and benefit from their work program. I received about \$750 monthly, but trying to survive on that was incredibly stressful. With two kids at home, one with special needs, and nobody to watch the children, it was really hard. So many times, I felt like I wanted to give my son up because TCA and SNAP just weren't enough. I struggled with getting daycare for him because of his special needs.

I was owed several hundred dollars a month in child support, but when I got my check, I was only getting \$160 because child support was keeping the money to "pay back" my TCA. That extra money could have helped me with so many things. I could have gotten nicer housing in a safer neighborhood. I could have paid someone to watch my son while I worked or looked for jobs. I could have enrolled my daughter in dance classes she loved but I couldn't afford.

I just feel like if you have a state-funded program that's supposed to help mothers and kids, why would you keep the money that a father should be providing for their children? What is the purpose of TCA if you're going to do that? You have these mothers who need support from the government. They're trying to make things work with that small amount of money, and when they finally feel hope that they're going to be able to make it because they're going to get child support, they get one more disappointment.

I ask for a favorable report on SB 703.