

## House Republican Press Release

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### Klarides: Federal Heating Assistance at Risk



#### *\$40 Million Could be Lost in Fuel Funds to Needy*

HARTFORD – Deputy House Republican Leader Themis Klarides (R-Derby) joined House and Senate Republican Lawmakers today, announcing that more than \$40 million in federal heating oil assistance is in jeopardy if the state continues to allow those ineligible to participate in the program.

The Republican legislators said that the Department of Social Services can require Community Action Agencies that administer the programs to request valid social security numbers from applicants. Non-verification of applicants and the use of phony social security numbers have spawned an FBI fraud investigation into New Haven's CAA.

Attorney General Richard Blumenthal, in an opinion provided to the state DSS, said that social security numbers can be used to verify income. Federal money can be provided only to those residing here legally, the Attorney General's office said in a previous opinion.

“Democrats are demonstrating a dangerous disinterest in acting to correct this,” said Klarides. “Illegal immigration isn't the problem here. The fact that we are not in compliance with federal law by providing this assistance to those who do not qualify means we may lose the \$40 million the federal government sends the state to assist those that do qualify. That means no one, legal or illegal, will be able to get this heating assistance.”

If the legislature fails to implement meaningful verification policies, then there can be no real anti-fraud measures put in place, the Republicans said.

Klarides and legislative Republicans made their comments prior to a legislative hearing by members of three legislative oversight committees addressing the DSS fuel assistance plan.