

House Bill No. 5163- An Act Establishing a Task Force to Study Methods and Programs for Improving Affordability for Children, Families and Young Professionals
Operation Fuel d/b/a Generation Power CT Written Testimony
February 17, 2026
Submitted by Mike Turaj, Policy & Public Affairs Advisor



Dear Co-Chairs Rep. Paris, Sen. Maher, Ranking Members Rep. Dauphinais, Sen. Perillo, Vice-Chairs Rep. Welander and Sen. Cohen, and Honorable Members of the Children’s Committee:

Operation Fuel d/b/a Generation Power CT Supports House Bill No. 5163, *An Act Establishing a Task Force to Study Methods and Programs for Improving Affordability for Children, Families and Young Professionals*

Operation Fuel d/b/a Generation Power CT (GPCT) is a 501(c)3 private nonprofit founded in 1977 during the oil embargo, when energy price shocks destabilized household budgets and the national economy. Today, we continue to provide emergency energy and utility assistance to eligible Connecticut households experiencing financial crisis. We provide direct bill assistance for qualifying Connecticut residents who earn up to 75% of State Median Income (SMI). Each program season offers struggling Connecticut households a one-time assistance grant up to \$500 towards a utility bill or one-time fuel delivery. More information can be found at <https://gpct.org/gethelp/>. For thousands of households, **GPCT is the last option in an emergency.**

GPCT supports¹ H.B. 5163, which would create a taskforce to study methods and programs that improve affordability for our state’s children, families, and young professionals. The bill as currently written would require the taskforce to identify and analyze systemic barriers in affordability, study how inflation impacts certain regions in the state, develop a method for tracking improvements in the state for low-income areas, and identify policies or programs that can help and identify funding sources for these programs that may improve affordability. (Section 1, Lines 1-28). One area we suggest that the taskforce investigate is energy affordability, and how programs such as Generation Power CT and the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP), can help families pay their energy bills.

As Connecticut’s emergency energy assistance fund, Generation Power CT sees every day how our state’s affordability crisis impacts limited income families, especially single-parent households. In Fiscal Year 2025, 15% of our approved households were single income households, with at least one dependent under the age of 18. Here are a few quotes from just a few of our neighbors struggling with affordability:

- “I am a single, divorced mother of two. I am solely responsible for all of my daughter's expenses including full medical, dental and car insurance. I also care for my 87 year old mother. Even though i am a teacher it has become increasingly more difficult to pay my bills. I am currently living pay check to pay check. I have consolidated all of my credit

¹ <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2026/TOB/H/PDF/2026HB-05163-R00-HB.PDF>



cards to one loan and got rid of them all to further budget my spending. I had knee surgery last spring and I am still on a payment plan to cover the copays and cost of surgery. I am doing everything I can to keep my children in their childhood home but the cost of living is so high.”

- “I highly appreciate [Generation Power CT] for helping me and my daughter when I was hospitalized and didn’t have enough money to fuel up with oil. I highly appreciate you guys for the help on keeping us warm this Thank you.”
- “I am a single mother to two boys 3 and 10. I cannot manage rent and food and daycare and the electric is so high . I keep my house on 45-50 and put my kids to sleep in coats. Eversoicee won't come out to tell me why my bills are so high. I just need help I'm sorry.”

Simply put, *when people are in an emergency situation, they need somewhere to go.* Medical challenges, job loss, and other life events strike when least expected.

As an organization who receives more requests for assistance than our current funding allows, we see firsthand how our state’s affordability challenges impact the most vulnerable residents in our state. In January 2026, GPCT received requests for assistance from 1,822 households – in just 11 days. This demand represents the most applications received in the shortest period of time, since our founding in 1977.

GPCT supports the creation of the taskforce to identify systemic barriers to ensure programs deliver essential services to the most vulnerable. If there is any opportunity for us to share our clients’ experiences, stories, program data, or otherwise contribute, we are stand ready to support the taskforce however we can.

Thank you for your consideration of our written comments.

Sincerely,

Mike Turaj
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