MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

Re: A.1620 Hevesi / S.2375 Krueger
In relation to Home Stability Support Programs

It is unacceptable that the Empire State has over 150,000 homeless children and another 80,000 families on the brink of homelessness. Statewide, over 23,000 more people become homeless than escape homelessness every year.

The existing shelter allowance is woefully inadequate compared to the actual cost of housing where two-thirds of public assistance households are living in housing whose rents significantly exceed their shelter allowances. More than 82,000 households have rents that are 1.5 times or more than their shelter allowance. Nearly 21,000 households have rents that are 2.5 times their shelter allowances. As a result, many families are being forced into homelessness at no fault of their own.

The Home Stability Support (HSS) program is a fiscally responsible solution to this problem. The HSS program, as outlined in the above-named legislation, will:

- Keep families and individuals on public assistance in their homes and out of homeless shelters;
- Reduce costs to the state and taxpayers by preventing evictions, reducing emergency shelter utilization and reducing costs of other homeless services; and
- Provide relief to financially strapped counties.

Through the use of a new Shelter Supplement, which will support between 85 percent and 100 percent of the fair market rent, families will be able to afford to stay in their homes and not be forced to live in shelters or on the street. In addition to the shelter supplement, eligible recipients will also receive home stability support services to avoid homelessness and achieve long term housing stability.

The New York State Catholic Conference enthusiastically supports passage of this bill.