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Written testimony of Margaret Smith Hale

in support of Senate Bill No. 780

An Act Concerning the Solicitation of Charitable Funds Act

Respectfully Submitted to the General Law Committee
February 13, 2009

I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony to the General Law Committee in favor of Senate Bill 780, An Act Concerning the Solicitation of Charitable Funds Act.

On January 1, 2009 ITN*NorthCentralConnecticut*TM began offering rides 24/7 to seniors and adults with visual impairments in Bloomfield, East Granby, East Windsor, Enfield, Granby, Somers, South Windsor, Suffield, Windsor and Windsor Locks. This alternative program is unique and uses a combination of volunteer and paid drivers who provide rides in private vehicles. There is no restriction on the purpose of a ride, and help is offered to carry packages, fold walkers, and open doors.

ITN*NorthCentralConnecticut*TM is a community-supported nonprofit that does not use public dollars for operating expenses. Volunteers are used to keep the service affordable. Fares, memberships, car donations, walks and other resources fund the operation. Our average fare is only \$9.

Our budget for FY 2009/2010 will be \$282,300. This includes 2.5 employees plus 2 part-time paid drivers. It will take four years of operations before our fares and memberships will be self-supporting. In the growth years we will rely on grants and private donations. An audit that could cost between \$6,000 and \$8,000 will be a heavy burden and take away from our ability to increase our capacity and possibly reduce our opportunity to receive grants.

We are very grateful for the support of the Connecticut Society of CPAs; the Connecticut Council for Philanthropy; the Department of Consumer Protection; the Attorney General; the Connecticut Association of Nonprofits; and the Pro Bono Partnership.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my support of SB780, An Act Concerning the Solicitation of Charitable Funds Act. Please feel free to contact me at (860)758-7833 or at MSmithHale@itnnorthcentralct.org.