

Larson Works to Raise Earned Income Tax Credit Awareness

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HARTFORD- Today, U.S. Congressman John B. Larson visited the Volunteer Income Tax Clinic (VITA) at Mi Casa Community Center in Hartford and spoke with local residents about the Earned Income Tax Credit, a federal tax break designed to assist lower-income earners. Larson spoke to a crowd of Hartford residents, accompanied by: Mayor Eddie Perez, Jodonna Powell of the IRS, and Jorge Rivera, the Executive Director of Mi Casa Community Center.

"The Earned Income Tax Credit is an excellent resource for hard working families to get some well-deserved financial help from the Federal Government," stated Larson. "Last year, an estimated \$6 million of potential EITC benefits went unclaimed by families living in Hartford. Too many working families are simply unaware of this benefit they have earned."

The tax clinic at Mi Casa Community Center is run through the cooperative efforts of Mi Casa, the local non-profit Co-Opportunity, Inc. and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). At the Mi Casa VITA clinic and throughout Connecticut's 1st District, certified tax preparers help individuals determine if they are eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit. According to the IRS, the average dollar amount received from EITC recipients in Connecticut in 2003 was \$1,590. In Hartford, the amount received was \$1,890.

"The EITC money that families receive is money that can be well invested," said Mayor Perez. "Whether it is used for education, mortgages, health care expenses, or supporting local merchants, it builds personal wealth and strengthens communities."

Congressman Larson is dedicated to helping hardworking individuals and families understand their rights and maximize their benefits when it comes to their taxes. Under the leadership of Speaker Pelosi and Chairman Rangel of the Ways and Means Committee, last week the Ways and Means Committee passed the Taxpayer Protection Act of 2007 which would increase IRS outreach to provide taxpayers with stronger protections against tax fraud and identity theft. It also includes a strengthened outreach program for the Earned Income Tax Credit in the future.

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