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**Supporting House Resolution 8196: \$2 million Appropriation to The Elisha Project**

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. It is with great pleasure that I submit this testimony in support of House Resolution 8196, calling for an appropriation of \$2,000,000 for the Elisha Project and thank Representative Messier for sponsoring this resolution, and to Representatives Fellela, Alzate, Stewart, and Cruz for co-sponsorship.

I first met George in my previous capacity as a City Councilwoman in Central Falls. During this meeting I was surprised that I had never heard of the food rescue organization the Elisha Project and by George's humility. He sought no recognition; his only aim was to alleviate food insecurity, driven by his own experiences.

Months later, the pandemic struck and Central Falls was among the hardest-hit communities in the state and nation. Once the school's closure was announced. I knew what this meant for the many children who relied on school meals, as well as their already struggling parents. I immediately contacted the Elisha Project and in a matter of a day or two they stepped in, opening its doors to our families. The demand for support was overwhelming, leading them to provide weekly boxes of meals to countless families in need. The Elisha Project became a lifeline for our community during the pandemic.

Although many feel like the days of the pandemic are behind us and in some ways they are, however, the lasting effects of the mental health crisis, homelessness, and food insecurity still persist.

I urge the general assembly to support the Elisha Project, an organization that serves as a reminder that there are extraordinary individuals tirelessly working to address our most basic needs. Their efforts bring hope and tangible resources that support the children, families, and communities they serve.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony.