

## Introduction

I am Linda Gessaman of Springfield, Illinois appearing on behalf of Homeless United for Change (HUC), a community based organization. HUC is an organization that facilitates leadership initiatives from among the homeless ranks to change social injustices against the homeless community.

Homeless United for Change (HUC) has come today to introduce to you a new socio-economic group called the "Homeless Culture." This culture is often times overlooked but is a part of the community. It inhabits the missions, breadlines, and shelters and is comprised of the underserved low and moderate income people and racial minorities who have experienced homelessness for a variety of reasons.

CRA is intended to assure that banks would serve all parts of our communities, particularly the under-served low and moderate income people and racial minorities. However, the Banks are making money from and penalizing the mentally ill, the alcoholic, and the drug addict in the homeless community/culture. That's not right!

There are many people who receive social security benefits that are directly deposited into bank accounts. When a check bounces, it is not like you and me. It has devastating effects. An elderly woman within our organization bounced a check, which bounced another check, which bounced another check. The bank fees totaled her entire social security money for the next two months. She was rendered homeless.

There are individuals within the homeless culture who use stored value cards out of necessity but are unaware of the hidden costs associated with them. These people already live on limited incomes and are charged a reload fee, inactivity fee, overdraft fee, dispute fee, payday advance fee, the list goes on and on. This is not right!

HUC and other community organizations desire to be involved in CRA implementation and performance evaluation. The reason we want to be involved is because many of us have suffered with and went through homelessness because of the greediness in America in the name of profit. We have lost our homes, our cars, our money, and our human dignity to the banks. HUC believes that when a person is down, it is human nature to want to survive, to hold on -- people will sign papers for loans with outrageous interest rates, and be subject to unfair hidden costs, not giving thought of the consequences until too late. The people who understand the unfairness of it are the people who have experienced it. HUC's voice needs to be heard!

PERSONAL TESTIMONY - ILLINI BANK, SPFLD., IL  
(Protest Statement - Banks won't listen unless community organizations are involved!)