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TESTIMONY PREPARED FOR THE CT HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
By Greater New Britain Teen Pregnancy Prevention, Inc.
Pathways/Senderos Center
1/30/07

Good afternoon Chairpersons Harris, Valano and other honorable committee members. My name is RoseAnne Bilodeau and I am the executive director of Greater New Britain Teen Pregnancy Prevention, Inc., also known as the Pathways/Senderos Center. Our organization has been in existence since 1993. We provide teen pregnancy prevention and positive youth development services for poverty-stricken, mostly Latina/o youth from New Britain. With this intervention, our youngsters have produced unparalleled results thus winning us national recognition and status. Currently, we provide comprehensive, holistic, long term services on a daily basis throughout the year to girls and boys ranging in ages from 10 – 18 years old. We utilize a case management approach to assist our youngsters in developing realistic dreams for their future. Then, we use those dreams to motivate our youth to put in the special efforts required to do well in school, plan for the future, engage in community service, work when age-eligible, graduate from high school pregnancy-free and move on to higher education. We are an independently evaluated program and our 13 year longitudinal study documents that we have a 95.4% pregnancy free rate; 100% of our teens who remain in our program graduate from high school; 67% of our graduates go on to higher education, all of whom are the first in their families to do so; of our other graduates, all except one received special education certificates when “graduating”

from high school. All of our graduates and many of our age-eligible participants are employed and pay taxes.

Due to these spectacular findings, in 2005 our Board of Directors and staff underwent a lengthy strategic planning process to determine how best to serve New Britain's neediest, at-risk youth. It was enthusiastically determined that Pathways/Senderos should grow, to double our size from 50 to 100 youngsters; and that, we wanted to stay in the Arch Street neighborhood where so many of our participants reside. The Board also decided that the best way to accommodate this growth would be to build or purchase a building of our own so that we could properly control and protect our children's environment.

We've searched the neighborhood and found a suitable facility at 333 Arch Street which can be purchased, renovated and expanded. We originally anticipated that we would have a few years to put our plans in action. However a short while ago, the building where we are currently housed has been purchased by the Hospital for Central Connecticut who plans to move part of their operations here. Thus, we are forced to move although we have not been given a specific date by which we need to leave.

With that, I am here today to ask you to please support Pathways/Senderos Center's desire to grow and lift more low-income youngsters up out of poverty by approving Senate Bill 52, "An Act Authorizing Bonds of the State for the Benefit of Pathways/Senderos in New Britain."

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

1/30/07

Good afternoon,

My name is Jean Carlos Sanchez and I am a 16 year old junior at New Britain High School. I have been in Pathways/Senderos for 6 years. I live with my grandmother in the Mount Pleasant Housing complex, which is one of the poorer projects in New Britain. I heard about Pathways from school when I was in elementary school. They said there was a program around the area of Arch St. that would help me with school. Pathways taught me that people can change with a little help. I have become a better person because of this program. I have become more open minded about life and where I want my life to go. I am planning to attend Johnson and Wales College in Florida, and be the first of my family to go to college. I want to be a Chef and major in Pastry Arts. My grandmother loves that I come to this program because I stay out of the streets and trouble, also because she wants me to have a future. I have been to many meetings to talk about the program but none compared to this one. I am telling you if I change because of this program just imagine how many kids can also change by joining this program. We need Pathways in New Britain so other kids that come from the same background as me can have this opportunity and excel in and out of the classroom. Please support Senate Bill 52.