

**TESTIMONY OF THE**  
**BRIDGEPORT YMCA**  
**IN SUPPORT OF HB-07084-R00-HB**  
**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2007**  
**11:00 AM**  
**LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING**  
**HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT**

Good morning, my name is Timothy Bartlett. I am appearing today in my capacity as the Executive Director of the Bridgeport YMCA in Bridgeport, Connecticut. The Bridgeport YMCA respectfully asks that you pass HB-07084-R00-HB "An Act Establishing an Urban Violence Reduction Program".

The Bridgeport YMCA represents more than 4200 members and serves over 1600 youth. We are very lucky that we can see the positive changes our programs make in our community. We currently work with the city and run our "Y Nights in the City", a program open to all Bridgeport teens where we close up our YMCA and reopen just for the sole purpose of teen use. Twice a month from 6 to 9pm on Saturday nights, we give them a place of their own. Through swimming, basketball, racquetball and fitness classes we are able to give these teenagers a place to come to where it is friendly, fun, warm and safe – something unfortunately they do not all get to feel on a daily basis. We provide a social outlet for them while helping them with job training, problem solving and conflict resolution skills. We provide opportunities to express themselves.

To succeed in life a person needs to feel safe, the treat of violence is far too real for many of our teens today. More can be done to ensure that this does not have to be a way of life for our young men and women. The Bridgeport YMCA is ready to partner with the city and the state on this effort. We would welcome the opportunity to work with the city and the state to expand our programming and to implement additional programs to successfully reduce violence in our community.

For more than 120 years the Bridgeport YMCA has been making an impact on our communities. With the passage of *HB 0784-R00* you have the opportunity to make the lives of our cities teens, our future leaders better.

This completes my testimony. Thank you for your consideration.