



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

**Testimony of  
Brian Austin, Jr., Under Secretary  
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Office of Policy and Management  
Before the Judiciary Committee  
February 23, 2007**

Good morning Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Brian Austin, Jr. and I am the Under Secretary of Criminal Justice Policy and Planning at OPM. I am here today to testify in favor of House Bill 7084 An Act Concerning the Urban Violence Reduction Grant Program.

This legislation establishes an Urban Violence Prevention Grant within the Office of Policy and Management. These grants to municipalities, or nonprofit agencies authorized to apply for the grant on the municipalities' behalf, are targeted toward preventing violent criminal activity involving young people in urban areas.

In her budget, Governor Rell is proposing \$4 million to establish this grant program. These funds will allow municipalities to work with their community organizations to develop programs with the highest potential for benefit in their community. The three largest cities, Bridgeport, Hartford and New Haven would be eligible to apply for Urban Violence Reduction grants up to \$750,000 each. Waterbury and New London would be eligible for grants up to \$500,000 each. The remaining funds would be available to other urban areas.

This initiative is designed to combat violence in urban areas. Urban violence is by no means a strictly law-enforcement issue. Under this proposed grant program, each community would have the opportunity to determine which programs and services would best serve their youth. These programs and services could include mentoring and tutoring services, youth athletic leagues and training in conflict resolution and peer counseling. The new funds would supplement current efforts and offer real opportunities to reduce violent activity in our cities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My staff and I would be happy to answer any questions that you might have.