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## Testimony - HB 7348

Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee, my name is Erica Bromley and I am the Director of the Manchester Youth Service Bureau and a Board member of the CT Youth Services Association and co-chair of the Advocacy Committee. I am testifying in support of HB 7348, AN ACT CONCERNING AFTER SCHOOL AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME GRANTS.

As you may be aware, CYSA has been a firm, long-time advocate for the funding and strengthening of after school and out of school time programs and supports moving the award period for these funds to a two-year time frame. Extending the period of funding to 24 months provides greater opportunity to offer stable, high quality programs and would better position programs to develop sustainability plans. An additional benefit to the program provider and the general assembly lies within the realm of outcome measures. Programs funded for two years would be able to provide a richer data base of performance measures cultivated from baseline and comparative data. And while measuring changes in academic achievement, school attendance and in-school behavior is important, CYSA would encourage this committee to consider outcome measures more pertinent to those community-based programs that provide services to youth where diversion from the juvenile justice system may be the primary objective of after school and out of school time programs.

HB 7348 also speaks to the Department of Education providing or contracting with another entity to provide grant recipients with: technical assistance, evaluation, program monitoring and professional development. CYSA clearly sees the value and significance to this portion of the raised bill. Building community and program capacity ultimately enhances program quality and assists in moving the agenda of after school programs forward at the local level. To be certain, it is the community at a grassroots level that will be a major contributor in sustaining after school programs once state funding dissipates or ends entirely. CYSA's network of over 90 Youth Services Bureaus stands ready to bring its broad based resources to the forefront of local program capacity building and can work effectively with the CT After School Network to reach the 129 communities served by YSBs.

I thank you for your time and am more than happy to answer any questions.