

Public Hearing Testimony

Speaker:
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on WOMEN

Date:

Bill Number:

SB 1411
HB 7359

Written Testimony of
The Young Women's Leadership Program
A Project of the CT General Assembly's
Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Before the
Education Committee
Monday, March 12, 2007

In support of;

SB 1411, AAC Youth Services Bureaus

HB 7359, AAC a Grant Program to Combat Truancy

Truancy is a behavior that affects both boys and girls. However, there are clear gender differences in regards to the thoughts and feelings that cause truancy. Research indicates that girls are more likely to skip school or runaway because they use these behaviors as a coping mechanism for dealing with sexual and physical abuse and/or relationship problems¹.

According to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, girls involved in the court system in the United States²;

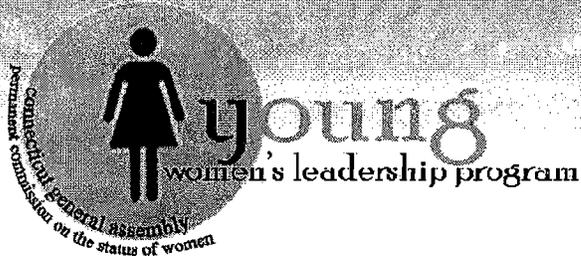
- Come from minority backgrounds
- Have a history of poor school performance
- Have experienced physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse at high rates
- Use drugs/alcohol
- Have gone without medical and mental health attention, and
- Often feel that life is oppressive and lack hope for the future

We believe that increasing funding for youth service bureaus will provide young girls with education and programs that will help them regain a sense of excitement for their futures. We hope that during the discussion about funding for Youth Services Bureaus, girls specific needs are kept in mind. We know that with mentoring programs, community based programs and the like, girls will be much less likely to be truant which will keep them out of the juvenile justice system (where too often than they do

¹ Court Involved Girls in Connecticut; Eleanor Lyon, Robin Spath, 2002

² OJJDP, 1998

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*empowering young women
to lead their best lives possible*

not receive gender appropriate services) and will help strengthen their; school performance, health of their relationships and general attitudes about their futures.

In order to become leaders, girls need to feel that their concerns and voices are valid and respected. Subsequently, mentoring programs and youth specific programs are crucial to providing young women with positive role models. We believe that an investment in youth services, with an eye on girl's specific needs, is an investment into the future of Connecticut's economy and in the development of Connecticut's future leaders.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on these very important bills.

The Young Women's Leadership Program was established in 2006 as a project of the Connecticut General Assembly's Permanent Commission on the Status of Women. It is lead by a group of young women representing a wide variety of career fields and areas of expertise.

The mission of the Young Women's Leadership Program is to inspire and empower young women in high schools, vocational schools, colleges and beyond to emerge as leaders. We will provide testimony on several issues to highlight the perspectives of young women and to educate legislators about how different legislation would affect young women throughout the state.