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I'm writing today as a result of the Governor's proposed budget cuts regarding The Commission on Children and the Parent Trust.

My name is Stephanie Alderman; I am a working wife and mother of four school-aged children from elementary to high school. Prior to 2004 that in itself was more than enough but then I took part in PLTI. Parent Leadership Training Institute is a program founded by The Commission on Children and supported by the Parent Trust. I learned how our city and state work in the usable sense in order to help effect positive change. I always thought I was too busy to volunteer but learned how to manage my time helping me become a better parent. PLTI ran for 20 weeks and helped me see beyond my immediate family circle to what was happening in our community. It taught me that I am an advocate for not only my children but for all children.

My children also took part in a children's version of the program CLTI, helping to cement the idea that they too can make a difference in our world. They still come to me with concerns but also ideas how they can help solve them. My eldest while in the program petitioned her entire elementary school to pressure the PTA to set aside funds for new library books, they gave over \$1,000. Another example was when my children formed CAST (Children Against Sad Tsunamis) after the horrible tragedy and enlisting their friend's baked/sold cakes to the neighborhood raising \$175 for the Red Cross.

Since graduating from the program I have had the opportunity to help other parents in my roles as Middletown School Association Secretary and as a PTA President. I've continued to work as a volunteer for Middletown's School Family Community Partnerships program. I've served on building and hiring committees and even represented Connecticut in a parent forum in Virginia where parents there were looking to start a PLTI program because the program works. . I am currently on the Middletown Arts Council and a proud member of the PLTI design team trying to ensure that this program continues.

Together with my fellow alumni, we have logged thousands on volunteer hours in our community since our participation in this program. Listen to the many program directors dealing with children and families today and you will hear these words "we need more parent involvement". Many parents just do not know how to get involved. Programs like PLTI gives parents the tools they need to find their voice.

I have been a recipient of the work done by the Commission on Children and its PLTI program. I feel it would be a great loss to lose programs like this that have been proven effective. I have seen parents who come to the program saying very little, walk out with their heads held high at graduation to give the class commencement speech. Speaking out loud on behalf of all children.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Jae Alderman