

Good (afternoon/evening).

My name is Kathleen Sauer. I am a member of the Board of Directors of Greater New Britain Teen Pregnancy Prevention, Inc., also known as Pathways/Senderos Center. I am speaking today to request the restoration of State funding for my agency by including it in House Bill 6365, An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending 6/30/11 and Making Appropriations Therefore.

I live in New Britain and every spring for as long as I can remember, I have observed a disheartening phenomenon when I drive in the Arch St. neighborhood where the Pathways/Senderos Center is located. Just as flowers emerge when the weather warms, so do the new, teen mothers, pushing their babies' strollers along the sidewalks, sometimes accompanied by the young fathers. So many of these *girls and boys*—and I use these terms deliberately and advisedly—should be in school at the times I see them. It saddens me to know that the majority of these young parents will never realize their full potentials, will fail to meet their children's needs, and will perpetuate the cycle of poverty because they became parents before they were truly ready for the task.

Because I volunteer each week at Pathways, I have been able to witness the other side of the coin. In the positive, nurturing environment of the Center, our students come to realize that, through hard work and commitment, it is possible to escape poverty. Hope is a powerful "contraceptive." Staff members motivate our young people to avoid pregnancy by

providing them with real evidence that good things can happen in their lives. Some of the students who were served by Pathways in the "early days" have now graduated from college. They come back to the Center and are role models for the younger kids. It is very gratifying to see the children begin to believe that they, too, can achieve successful futures through delaying parenthood and embracing education.

There is no doubt that Pathways is successful in its mission. Our efficacy has been repeatedly demonstrated by outside evaluation. In a time when it is more important than ever that public funds be allocated to only the most credible stewards of those funds, you can be assured that we meet the new criteria for results-based accountability.

Pathways/Senderos has been nationally recognized for its nearly unprecedented success. Our Executive Director is an acknowledged expert in the field of teen pregnancy prevention. She has served as an advisor to both Republican and Democratic Presidential administrations, in one case attending an Oval Office meeting with President Clinton. Pathways has an outstanding, small staff which is committed to the long-term success of our students. Our program is a precious gem of which the State of Connecticut can be extremely proud.

These very worthy children are counting on all of you to assure that they have an equal chance of achieving the American dream. Please help them do that.