

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY:
GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE
March 16, 2009**

Senator Slossberg, Representative Spallone and members of the Committee:

My name is Dr. Sue Tenorio and I am an administrator in the Danbury Public Schools. My testimony relates to SB840, particularly the proposed elimination of the CT. Commission on Children. As a public school administrator I have benefited both directly and indirectly from the consistently high quality work of the Commission on Children.

For nine years I administered the school district's school readiness and 21st, Century/After School programs. The Commission on Children was instrumental in the planning, development and implementation of both of these statewide programs in partnership with individuals and organizations at local, state and federal levels. Connecticut's program models in both areas, school readiness/early childhood and after school/extended day, have served as prototypes for other states.

Equally significant has been the Commission's Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI), a 22 week statewide parent education program in which parents learn about the educational system and how to constructively engage with it. Danbury, with its exceptionally large immigrant population, has had a tremendous need to connect with parents who are estranged from and/or unfamiliar with the policies and procedures of its public schools.

For 10 years applied research projects completed by individuals in Danbury's PLTI classes have provided concrete information and materials to strengthen the relationship between families and schools. Over the years, I myself have hired numerous PLTI graduates for education positions knowing that they have proven abilities as well as a heightened awareness of the constructive role of parents in the educational process.

Over its approximate 15 years, the Commission has diligently and continuously been in touch with research related to children and their families, bringing identified issues and concerns to public attention and action. Statewide forums conducted by the Commission are well-planned, involving experts in the field and dealing in a timely manner with major, critical issues such as brain research and bullying.

As a Hispanic female, I am sensitive to the proposal of elimination and/or consolidation of the various state commissions as a means towards dealing with the State's budget crisis. Yet as an educator I am daily reminded how many of our children are needy and in need of a strong and continuous voice at the State level, reminding all of us about what needs to be done and working with us to make it so. The statewide voice for our children has been and continues to be the Commission on Children. Please allow it to continue to do what it does best—represent our children for us and with us.

Thank you.