

March 16, 2009

To the Members of the GAE Committee:

My name is Christine O'Grady. I am from Middletown and a mother of 3.

I've attached an e-petition which 31 individuals have signed to this effect. And I quote:

We believe that the governor's proposal to eliminate the Children's Trust Fund (CTF) would drastically negatively impact families in Connecticut. As there is a national standard for doing so, we further urge the legislature to keep prevention programs under CTF and not the Department of Children and Families. Prevention programs are successful only if there are separate and distinct lines drawn between prevention and intervention services.

We further believe that the Connecticut Commission on Children (COC) serves as a barometer for our citizens that have no voice; the children. Without its expertise and finger on the pulse of our communities, our families would be severely underserved and children's lives would be severely impacted.

Legislators, please keep CTF and COC.

With a simple Google search, I immediately found over 30 states that practice separation of intervention and prevention services through the use of Children's Trust Fund. The governor has proposed moving some programs under DCF. As it has become national practice to do so; to move backwards would be a detriment to families.

I am a home visitor for Family School Connections and I know families would not let me in their door if the program was affiliated with DCF. Families would be suspect and would not sign on to these voluntary programs which are so important to keeping children and families healthy, safe and free of public services.

I firmly believe the quality control that the CTF offers would not continue under DCF. Programs would become less efficient and the state would get far less return on its dollar. I urge and implore you to keep the Children's Trust Fund as a separate entity....for the sake of families that are willing to reach out and help themselves. I can tell you for sure that none of the families I am working with at this time would have welcomed me if my program was affiliated with DCF.

I further believe that funding should be restored to the Parent Trust. The Parent Trust Fund supports so many important initiatives that help adults advocate for children and families. These initiatives are based on the same tenets our country was based on – using your voice and making a difference. Some people don't do this as second nature, they need skills training and that is what the Parent Trust provides them. Neighborhoods are cleaner and safer and hundreds of thousands of volunteer hours have been logged.

Most importantly, people become civically involved, because of the Parent Trust. They form coalitions and solve neighborhood and community problems resulting in less use of local and state systems. As a result of the Parent Trust, I was able to overcome my fear of public speaking and advocate for the largest group of individuals without a voice; the children of the State of Connecticut. Please reinstate the Parent Trust and provide a level of funding that would allow Connecticut to draw down the private match offered by the Graustein Memorial Fund. Private philanthropic organizations are waiting to match state funds.

Finally, the Commission on Children has a phenomenal track record for performing tasks that are imperative to the success of Connecticut families. This is not a special interest group as I have heard some refer to it. It is an agency focused on our future; our children. Nothing is more important than that. You, the legislature have

benefitted and continue to need their expertise. I need you to have the Commission available so that we continue to make informed choices regarding the fate of Connecticut families.

The governor's proposed budget couldn't have missed that mark any further. I urge you to keep the Children's Trust Fund, the Parent Trust Fund and the Commission on Children.

We need to put as much energy into finding ways to raise revenue as we are spending in identifying cuts to needed programs; please do not enact cuts that hurt our children. I urge you to seriously consider the "Better Choices for Connecticut" proposals as you work to identify ways to raise revenue.

Again, in addition to myself, I'm here representing the thirty-one Connecticut residents whose names appear on the attached petition.

Thank you.

	Name	Email	Comments
1		christineogrady@sbcg...	I support the petiti...
2	Noemi Gonzalez	noemi_gonzalez@sbcgl...	
3	Donna Marino	donnakma@comcast.net	
4	Rhonda Evans	rhonda@cafca.org	
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6	Lesley Darling	ldarling@ci.milford....	
7	ann doolittle	jcdo@aol.com	
8	Gary M. Johnson	Johnsongarym@aol.com	
9	Diane Kruger	diane.kruger2@yahoo....	
10	peg taylor	squidmama71@yahoo.co...	our children are alr...
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12	Michele Waldner	waldnem@chc1.com	
13	Xiomara Campos	camposx@chc1.com	On behalf of the chi...
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15	Ebony Wicker	ebony@kaleidoscopedi...	
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