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March 15 ,2009

Senator Slossberg  
Representative Spallone  
Members of the Committee

The Connecticut Parent Teacher Association represents over 52,000 citizens of Connecticut who care deeply about the future of children and families in our state and who recognize that the very future of that state depends upon those children. With that awareness in mind it is unfathomable to us why the Commission on Children is being considered for elimination in the current budget. Since its inception over two decades ago the Commission has been a voice for our youngest citizens; it has been a resource for all of us involved with those young citizens and it has been the author of multiple initiatives that have sought to improve both our understanding of those young citizens and their health, well being and education. When we need information on best practices in early childhood education or data on the childhood obesity problem in our state ( just to name two examples) we can count on the Commission on Children to provide the answers. We can also count on the Commission to be in the forefront of identifying problems , trends and new research affecting the children of our state and to be among the first to offer solutions whether those solutions be in the form of needed legislation or an informational forum to bring awareness.

I know that CT PTA will continue to speak for the children of CT as we have done for over 100 years but our work will be seriously impacted if the Commission on Children is eliminated. There is no other organization in this state that can reach so many stakeholders and serve as a clearinghouse for such a vast amount of information. The children of CT will pay a huge price if this Commission is forced to disband!

Melissa Johnson  
President, Connecticut Parent Teacher Association