

Testimony on Proposed S.B. No. 127
An Act concerning the collection of child activity fees pursuant to a support order
Judiciary Committee

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Good morning, Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is M.J. Chironna. I am a full time graduate student at UCONN pursuing my Masters in Social Work and a full time mother of three children. In addition, I am a co-facilitator of a gender based after school program for middle school girls that focuses on improving leadership skills and self-esteem.

I am here today to testify on proposed bill number 127, an act concerning the collection of child activity fees pursuant to a support order.

I am supportive of this legislation and would hope that you support it. The case for providing child support enforcement services to enforce child support orders related to child activity fees is looking at the best interests of the child. In relation to other child support, developmentally appropriate enrichment programs such as athletics, art programs, dance and other programs promote the well-being of children. These programs are socially and emotionally beneficial to children.

Personally, I have seen the benefits of enrichment programs with my own children and on a professional basis, with the middle school girls in the after school program. The after school program is an excellent example of the benefits of extracurricular activities for children. Peers are important or more important than family members during the middle school years and these social experiences are critical for mature social functioning. In addition, middle school students are coping with chronic stressors that are associated with the normal developmental transitions in early adolescence. The gender based program for girls has strengthened positive peer relationships in a confidential environment. Other developmentally appropriate child athletic and extracurricular activities give children opportunities to enhance their social, physical and cognitive skills.

It is a challenge for parents to be able to afford some of the extracurricular and athletic programs. However, if someone has been required by a court or a family support magistrate to provide child support, it is beneficial for all people involved to know the financial support is being used for positive programs for their children. S.B. number 127 enforces the accountability of a parent to the well-being of their child.

I believe the availability of child support enforcement services to enforce child support orders related to child activity fees is beneficial to families and children. Thank you for listening. I would be happy to answer any questions.