



Good afternoon, my fellow citizens and state representatives:

My name is Maureen Mulroy. I live in Willimantic and I am speaking to you today in my capacity as Chair of the Connecticut Parenting Educator Network.

The Connecticut Parenting Educator Network (CT-PEN) is a statewide organization representing the professionals and front line staff working with and on behalf of CT's families and children. Our organization receives no funds from either the Commission on Children or the Children's Trust Fund so our endorsement for continuance of both organizations is not self-serving.

Just like our state government, Ct's families are reeling from the sudden onset of financial problems brought on by the downturn in the economy.

- Many families are struggling to adapt to sharply reduced circumstances because of lay offs, cutbacks in hours, and increases in cost of living items such as food, electric, prescription meds, gasoline.
- Families are doing all they can to reduce their expenses – keeping room temperatures low, cutting back on spending for groceries and medications, using food pantries, moving in with extended family and friends.
  - But these measures are not remotely enough to mitigate the pressures weighing on them.
- Parents and Heads of Households are experiencing intense stress.
  - Some are battling depression. Others acknowledge added stress on their marriage and relationships with their children.
  - Although they are trying to keep these stresses from their children, they are finding it difficult, if not impossible to continue to support and protect them.
  - Families report being in “free fall”, not knowing what will happen when they hit rock bottom.

The stresses, strains, and rampant insecurities being reported today by CT's families will only become worse as the recession deepens.

Now is not the time for defunding, dismantling, or relocating the very agencies that were established to keep our Governor and state legislators aware and in tuned with the needs of its families and children.

The Connecticut Parenting Educator Network (CT-PEN) respectfully requests that the Commission on Children and the Children's Trust Fund be allowed to continue their work of supporting children by supporting their families.