

am writing to oppose Governor Rell's Deficit Mitigation Plan to eliminate the Parent Trust Fund and Commission on Children. The benefit of engaging parents and supporting children from these sources is irrefutable at a time when academic performance has fallen so sharply and educated and involved citizenry has never been more important.

I have personally benefited from the Parent Trust Fund and am a graduate of both the Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) and Parents Supporting Excellence in Education (PARENT SEE). The training has empowered me to take a more active role in my local and state government as well as working to improve the schools in New Britain.

The engaging Presenters not only provided the excellent program curriculum, but went above and beyond to teach us to be courageous, confront changes and challenge ourselves.

As a result, I have volunteered hundreds of hours in my community, participated in many activities to improve my local school. I am an active member in my local Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ), am the New Britain Delegate to Connecticut Parent Power; I tutor children and am organizing a permanent, grassroots parent organization for New Britain.

As far as the Commission on Children goes, my association with Elaine Zimmerman and her generous and committed staff began when I was a VISTA Volunteer/Member. She allowed our VISTA members to use her office resources and expertise and supported the After School Initiative in every way possible. I think it would be very difficult to appraise the vast impact Elaine Zimmerman and the Commission on Children have had and need to continue to have on the lives of our children and youth. Their budget has already been sheered in half, surely you cannot support their demise.

Also, we stand to lose valuable matching funds from the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund and from other foundations both now and in the future for our state.

Let us not take the Parent Trust Fund and the Commission on Children and their impact on the future of our state lightly. Restore this funding to these important and vital assets to the families in our state. Should you need more supporting evidence regarding the importance of parents as the direct pipeline to improve the academic and social lives of our children, let me suggest you reference the extensive body of work from Anne T. Henderson (<http://www.parentinvolvementmatters.org/index.htm>) and Harvard's FINE Network as well as their National Family, School and Community Engagement Working Group which advises Arne Duncan. (<http://www.hfrp.org/family-involvement/informing-family-engagement-policy#FSCE>)

Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Respectfully submitted,

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