

Letter presented to the Select Committee on Children
Committee Bill No. 5144- AN ACT CONCERNING AN APPROPRIATION TO
EXPAND THE NURTURING FAMILIES NETWORK

February 26, 2009

Select Committee on Children
Room 011, Capitol Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Co-Chairs Anthony Musto, Diana Urban and respected members of the Select Committee on Children,

Thank you respected members of Select Committee on Children for the opportunity to present this letter on the appropriation of dollars to the Children's Trust Fund for the purpose of the expansion of the Nurturing Families Network to encompass programs aimed at preventing child abuse and neglect by single parents who have an income at or below the federal poverty level.

I represent a Nurturing Families Network site, which represents the interests of children and families for the prevention of child abuse. I am also a citizen in the town of Farmington, CT. The Nurturing Families Network (NFN) affords families the opportunity to explore their roles as nurturing parents through home visiting, group participation and telephone based support. This is a research based program, demonstrating a significant reduction in child abuse and neglect throughout the state of Connecticut. Increases in successful employment and education are evident among families participating in NFN. The family dynamics and positive parenting are strengthened with each milestone a family reaches in the program. Operating in twenty-nine (29) birth hospitals and in forty-two (42) locations throughout the state, the Nurturing Families Network provides more than fifteen-hundred (1500) home visits each year. Proven highly successful at achieving its goals, the impact NFN has upon families is very empowering. This expansion would allow more families into the program who have requested services but have been unable to participate due to ineligibility (i.e. not a first time parent and/or previous or present DCF involvement). I support the statement of purpose put forth in this bill, as I believe that this expansion will divert families from involvement with DCF (Department of Children and Families) and afford them with the opportunity to participate in a prevention program, thereby reducing the incidences of child abuse in CT.

As you are aware, oversight of the Nurturing Families Network is provided by the CT Children's Trust Fund (CTF). Within this oversight are a number of beneficial components which emphasize the success of the Nurturing Families Program. The

Continuous Quality Improvement Team (CQI), a team of CTF staff and NFN staff from every level position has been instrumental in ensuring that the NFN program is delivered in a qualitative and uniformed nurturing manner. In addition to the CQI Team are the Network Meetings during which the Children's Trust Fund brings the networks together to ensure the uniformity of the ideals of the program. As aforementioned, research is a strong component of this program. These numbers highlight the success of the program and the importance of this component when delivering this program to families. Families report feeling safe with their home visitor and comfortable building their positive parenting skills participating in a nurturing family program.

I fully support the continuity of the Nurturing Families Network Program under the direction of the Children's Trust Fund and the expansion of the Nurturing Families Network to encompass programs aimed at preventing child abuse to include single parents at or below the federal poverty level. Each year, families participating in the Nurturing Families Program send letters to their Legislators. As you receive letters from the families participating in the Nurturing Families Program please note that each letter is individually written and spoken from the perspective of a nurturing parent. Each letter you read is beautifully written and truly demonstrates the impact that this unique program has upon families in Connecticut.

Once again, thank you very much for the opportunity to submit this letter of support for this tremendous program. I fully support the prevention of child abuse and neglect in our community and families rely upon such programs to offer enjoyable prevention services.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Tuttle, M.Ed.