

**Testimony Presented to the Appropriations Committee of the Connecticut
General Assembly
February 11, 2010**

Senator Donald Williams, President Pro Tempore; Leonard Fasano, Minority Leader Pro Tempore; Christopher G. Donovan, Speaker of the House; Lawrence F. Cafero, Jr., Minority Leader; Senator Toni Harp; Representative John Geragosian; and members of the Appropriations Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to share my deep concern regarding the Governor's budget proposal for FY2011 that would eliminate the Commission on Children.

The Commission on Children plays a vital role in supporting the youth of the State of Connecticut that should not be eliminated in the upcoming budget session or any future budget sessions. A quick visit to the Commission on Children's website gives a concise overview of the value this agency brings to children and families first and foremost, but to the entire state as a whole because if our children and their families are thriving, so, too, will the State of Connecticut.

The web site also states the following: "Created with bipartisan support in 1985 by the Connecticut legislature, the 25-member Commission on Children brings representatives of all three branches of government—legislative, executive, and judicial—together with representatives of the private sector to promote public policies in the best interests of children. The agency is mandated to:

- provide information and conduct research regarding the status of children and children's programs in the state of Connecticut;
- enlist the support of leaders in business, education, and state and local governments, along with the news media, to improve services and policies for children;
- review coordination and assess all programs and practices in all state agencies as they affect children;
- serve as a liaison between government and private groups concerned with children; and
- make recommendations for children annually to the legislature and the governor"

I ask you, how will these mandates be addressed and carried out if the Commission on Children is eliminated? How can we set aside the significant role the Commission on Children plays in supporting children and families? In this time of budgetary constraints, it seems best practice to maintain the Commission on Children as it supports prevention programs that help save funds in the long run. An example of this agency's important work is The Parent Leadership Training