

**Senator McDonald, Representative Lawler, and members of the Judiciary Committee:**

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 5148. My name is Christopher Montes and I am the co-chair of the Advocacy Committee for the Connecticut Youth Services Association, the network of 100 Youth Service Bureaus serving 134 cities and towns across the state of Connecticut. I am also the Administrator of New Britain Youth & Family Services and its Youth Service Bureau. As a professional in the field of service to youth and families, I am in full agreement that FWSN children and youth need diversion programs that will keep them out of the juvenile justice system. The Family Support Center concept, much like our Youth Service Bureaus statewide, will provide services for “high end” FWSN youth who are at risk of more severe behaviors.

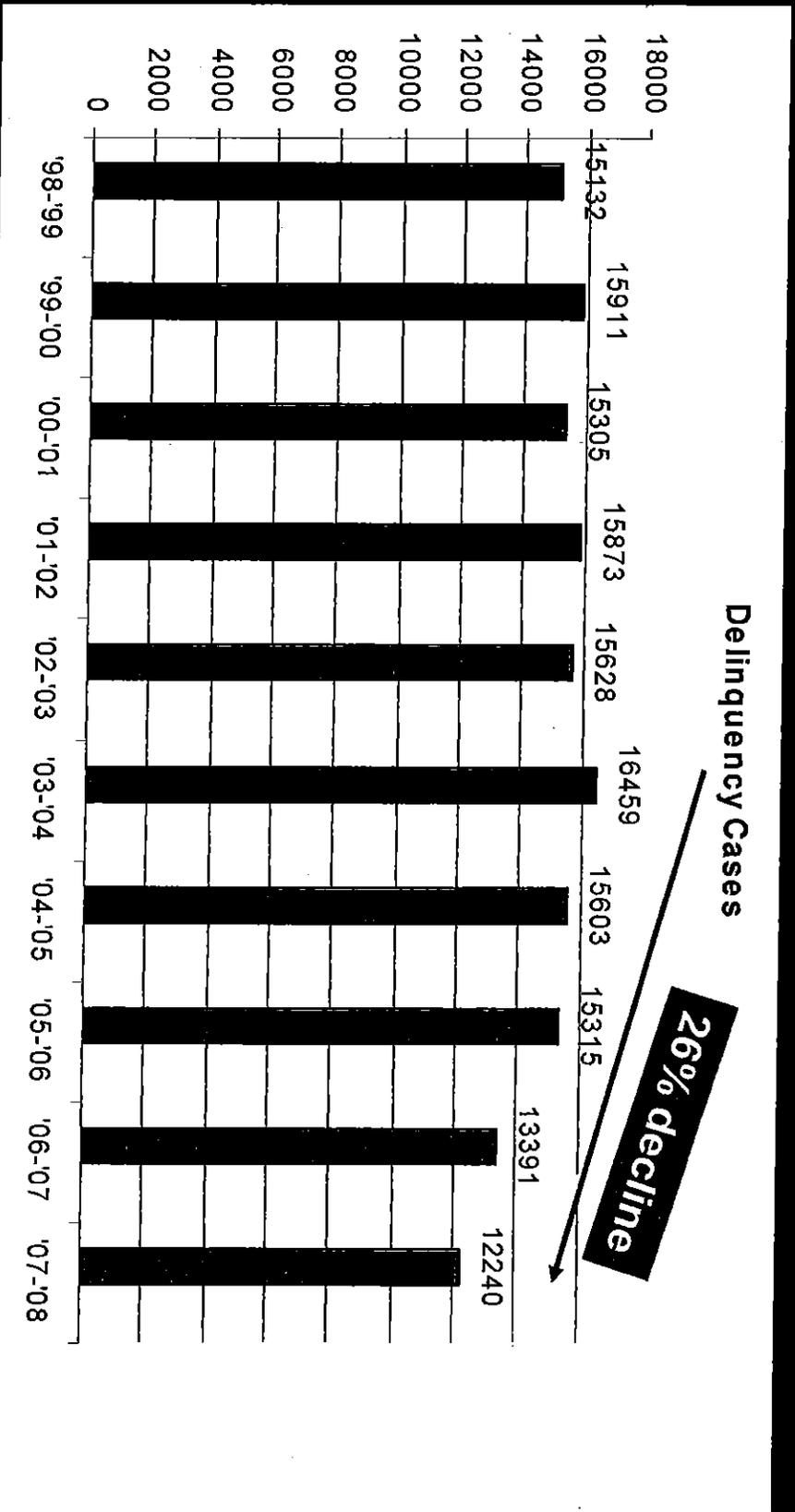
Under the existing **State Statute Section 10-19m**, Youth Service Bureaus are statutorily charged with the responsibility to provide “evaluation, planning, coordination, and implementation of services, including prevention and intervention programs for delinquent, pre-delinquent, pregnant, parenting and troubled youth referred to such bureaus by schools, police, juvenile courts, adult courts, parents, and self-referrals. A Youth Service Bureau shall be the coordinating unit of community-based services to provide comprehensive delivery of prevention, intervention, treatment, and follow-up services . . . such services shall be designed to meet the needs of youth by the diversion of troubled youth from the juvenile justice system. . . .” Moreover, Youth Service Bureaus in 11 of the 13 Juvenile Court Districts, including the six cities slated for FSC funding, currently operate the Local Interagency Services Teams (LIST), a joint initiative between CSSD, DCF, and the Connecticut Youth Services Association. The LISTs seek to garner input concerning gaps in services that impact potential DCF and/or CSSD involved youth from each town within in the Juvenile Court districts. These concerns are reported to the Local Implementation Committee comprised of the DCF Commissioner, CSSD Executive Director, Chief Administrative Judge for Juvenile Matters, and other key decision makers. Again, YSBs have this responsibility as they were awarded the role under a Request for Qualifications in September of 2009. In essence, it is what we do.

Therefore, in keeping with the statutory role of the Youth Service Bureaus, and in this economy where every dollar saved is crucial, the Connecticut Youth Services Association respectfully requests that you consider awarding any Family Support Center funding directly to the source . . . the local Youth Service Bureaus in the six proposed Juvenile Court Districts. The infrastructure already exists, as does supervision, and in many cases, physical space. In doing so, less funding would be necessary than needed to initiate an RFP process and cold start up with another agency that does not have the same role as the local YSB.

The City of New Britain and Connecticut Youth Services Association applaud you for recognizing the value in services to our youth in need and encourage you to fully utilize the four decades of experience Youth Service Bureaus bring to table in addressing these issues. Thank you very much for your time.

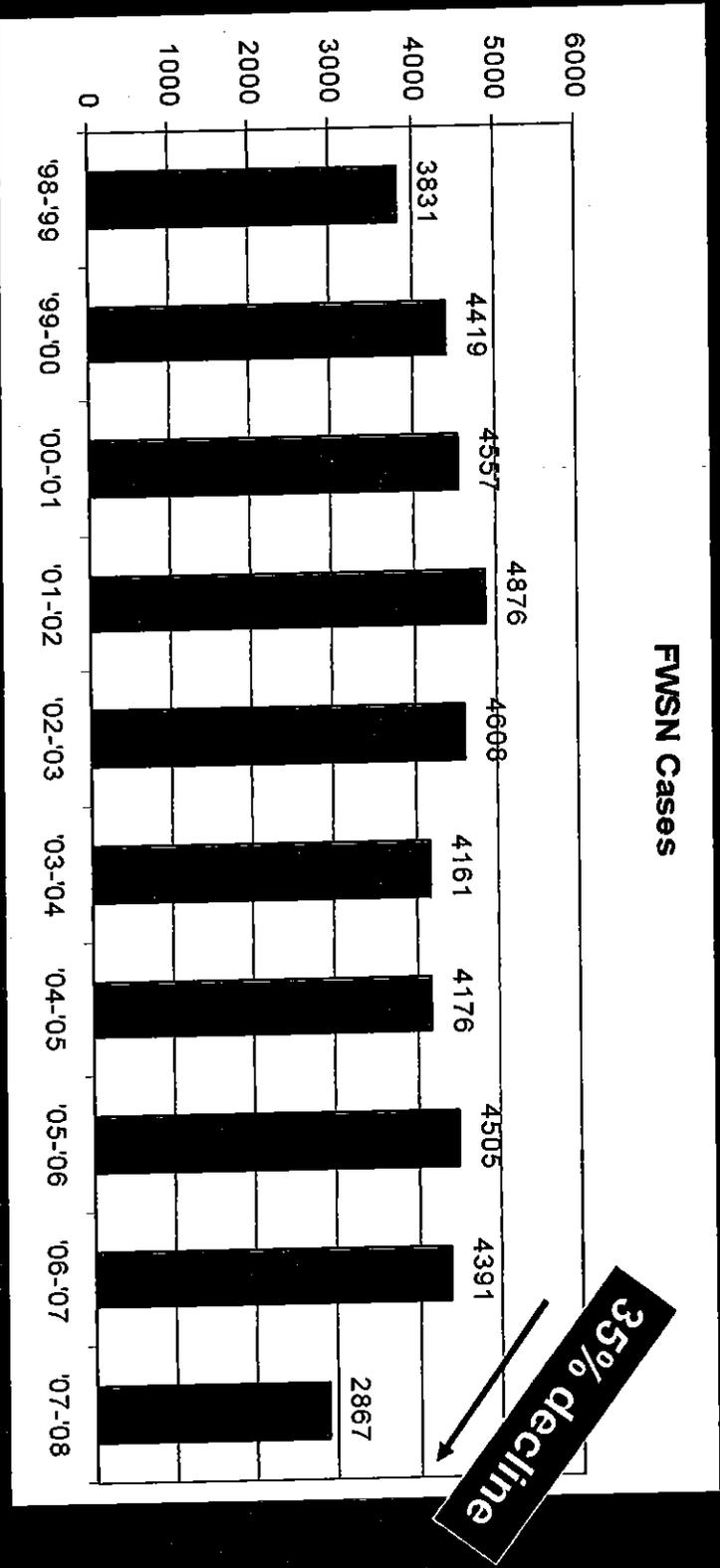
CYSA, the professional organization that serves as the collective voice of the Connecticut Youth Service Bureau system, is dedicated to promoting quality services for Connecticut’s children, youth, and families.

# Most Recent Intake Statistics



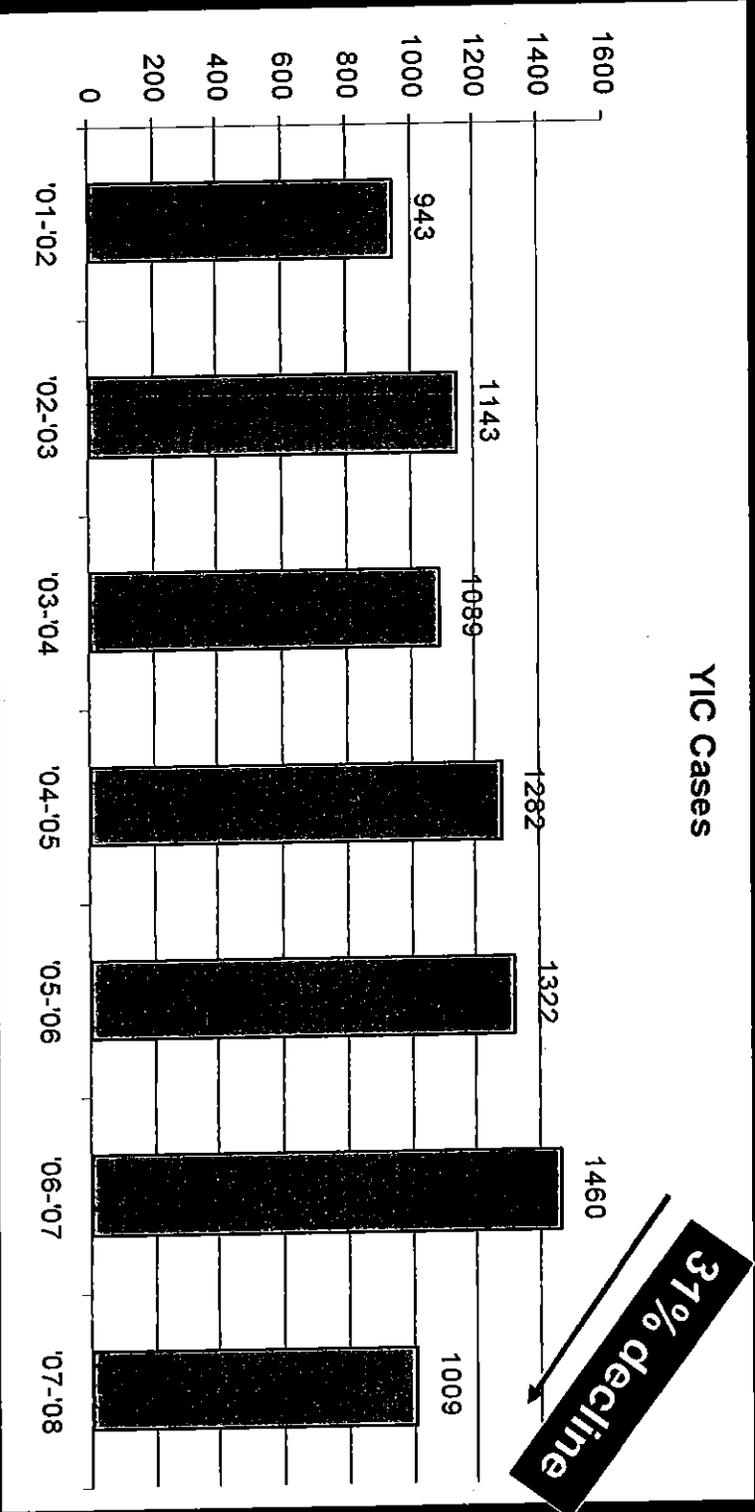
Source: Connecticut Judicial Branch Statistician

# Most Recent Intake Statistics



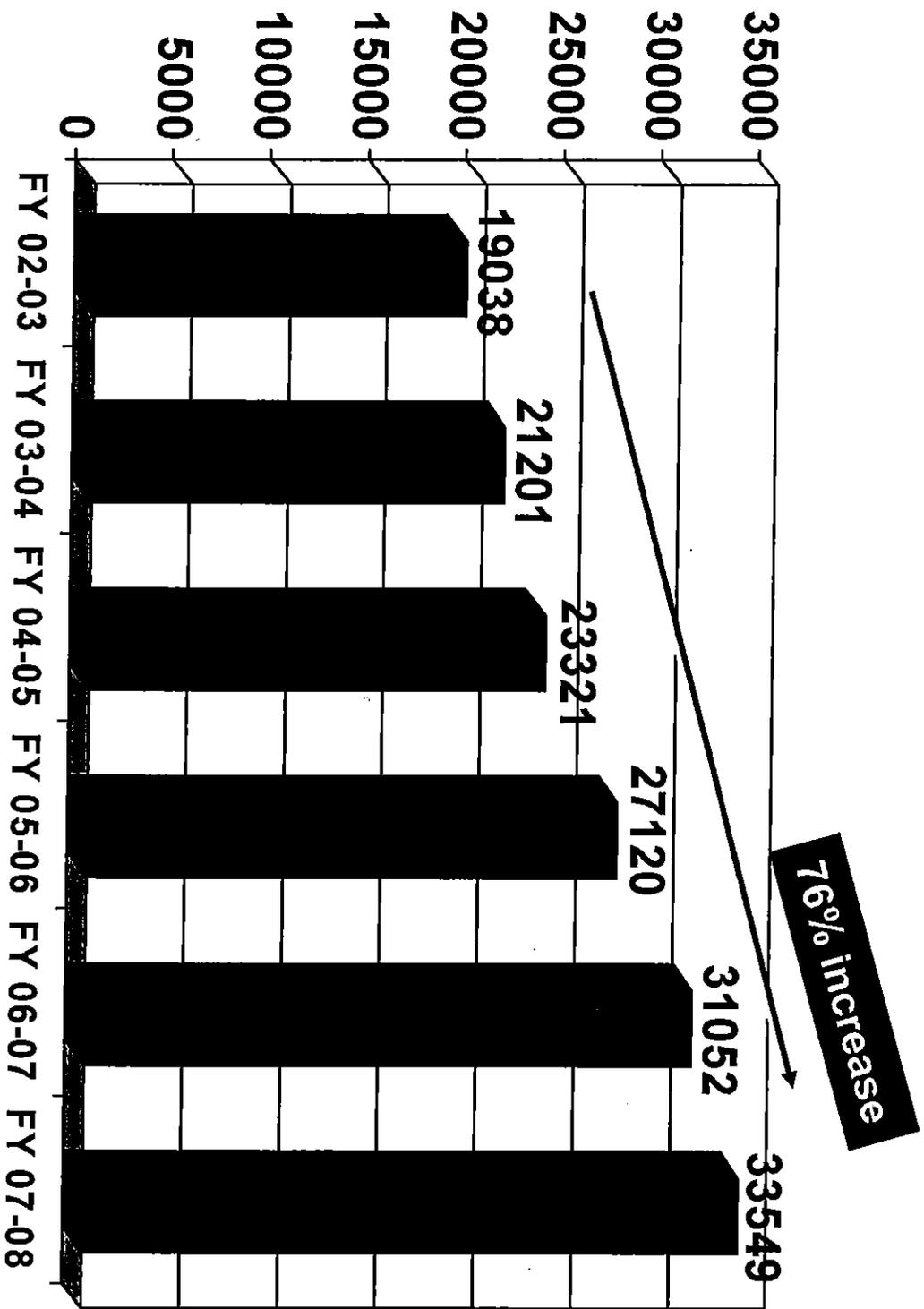
Source: Connecticut Judicial Branch Statistician

# Most Recent Intake Statistics



Source: Connecticut Judicial Branch Statistician

# YSB Referrals



Source: Connecticut State Department of Education