

3/4/11

Testimony

RE: Opposing Cuts to the Department of Children and Families  
Division of Juvenile Parole Services

My name is Perry Codianni; I am a Social Work Supervisor in the Division of Juvenile Parole Services. I have been employed with the Department of Children and Families for the past 27 years, with 20 of those years working specifically with youth who have been committed to the Department of Children and Families as delinquent. Twenty-eight years ago my brother was murdered in prison. We grew up in circumstances much like the children I have serviced; experiencing neglect, drug addiction, alcoholism, domestic violence, and personal violence. Sadly, my brother was unable to cope with these experiences, resulting in his incarceration and his eventual death. I have spent my entire professional career attempting to save children and youth from the fate my brother suffered. As such, I am profoundly concerned that the Department of Children and Families has lost its way with the proposed budget staff reduction plan located in Governor Malloy's Budget Summary under the Department of Children and Families on page B-140 under "Recommended Significant Changes" that calls for the elimination of 22 Juvenile Parole Staff. The Juvenile Parole Division is charged with the responsibility to provide supervision and oversight of treatment to all youth who have been committed as delinquent by the Superior Courts for Juvenile Matter for the State of

Connecticut. The children and youth that are committed to the Department of Children and Families as delinquent, along with their families, are the most vulnerable, needy, and complex cases in the Juvenile Justice system. With full implementation of Raise the Age scheduled to go into effect in July 2012, in conjunction with proposed legislation to raise the age of service to youth/young adults committed as delinquent to age 20, the Department of Children and Families is being extremely short sighted.

Facts you need to be aware of:

Over the past four months we have started to see the of the results of the first phase of Raise the Age as the delinquent population has increased from 290 in 10/1/10 to 352 presently; this is a 20% increase. A 60% increase is projected in July 2012 to nearly 600 youth and families. So why would the Department propose these cuts? Simple, Juvenile Parole Services does not fall under the Consent Decree and instead of doing due diligence to eliminate unnecessary management positions they choose to eliminate Parole Staff that provide the most direct services to the youth and families that have the most profound effect as an agent of change. I only wish that my brother had these services available to him, as the outcome may have been very different. Please do not role back time with these reductions; the children and families in the State of Connecticut can not afford it.

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