

March 24, 2011

Senator Toni Harp
Appropriations Committee Co-Chair
Legislative Office Building, Room 2700
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Dear Representative Toni Harp,

Hello! I am a student who attends Westhill high school in Stamford Connecticut. My name is Caitlin Santasiero and I am a sophomore. I am one of the students who attends the Regional Agriscience Program here in Stamford, which I love very much. I am honored to be in this program. The reason I am honored to be in this program is because when I grow up I would really love to become a veterinarian/surgeon, this program gives me the opportunity to pursue my passion in becoming a vet. I really would love for this program to have a wider variety of choices and by taking our funds away from the program it would not give students the opportunity to take other courses. This program has great opportunities for children that don't want to be sitting in an office.

This program really helps me with making my dream come true! A vet is what I want to be. Without SAE hours I would not have pushed myself to go look at vet hospitals to take an internship course. It really does make a difference in my life. Without this program I would not have much knowledge about my passion which is becoming a vet.

Another reason this program really helps me in pursuing my dream is because here in Stamford, we have a Doggie Daycare Program. Dogs come in to be washed, groomed, exercised and learn agility skills. This helps students not only interact with the dogs, but they get a feel for how to treat customers. Which will help later on in life with students communication skills. It also funds for the program such as field trips, flower sales, and food for food science. By cutting our programs budget that means we will have to work twice as hard to fund for educational field trips, flower sales, food science, animal food, etc. It is a lot of work to care for the animals we have but, we all love doing so.

As a student in the regional agriscience program I am also a part of the National FFA Organization. This year I am proud to say that I am going to do a career development event (CDE). Now the way that this helps me is I have to get up in front of judges. This is very good for later on in life because it helps you with communication and public speaking. So as a vet you may need to go to conventions and talk about your career in front of others. This is how this CDE will help you in the future. It helps children on strengthening their knowledge on a certain topic they are interested in and also strengthening your public speaking.

I am writing this letter to encourage you to please urge the appropriations committee to pledge 9 million dollars of the school choice funding increases proposed in the governor's budget to the state's 19 regional (Vo-ag) agriscience program.

The agriscience program has been drastically underfunded for more than 20 years which is unacceptable. I am not at all ok with the funding that has been provided to this program. We have to

