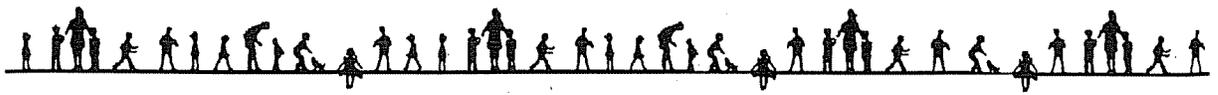


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CONNECTICUT YOUTH SERVICES ASSOCIATION



Senator Musto, Representative Urban, and Honorable Members of the Children's Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony. My name is Joel Rosenberg. I represent AHM (Andover, Hebron, Marlborough) Youth Services. In addition I am the President of Connecticut Youth Services Association, the lead agency consisting of a network of 100 YSBs serving 135 cities and towns across the state of Connecticut.

Today, I am testifying in support of Proposed Bill, HB 5816, AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE ON YOUTH VIOLENCE.

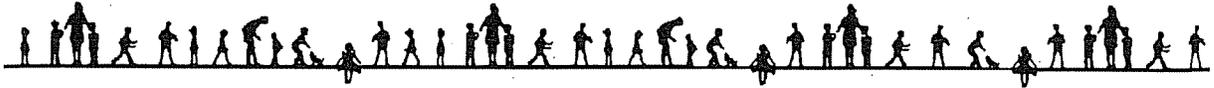
As a professional in the field of service to youth and families, I am in full agreement that Youth Violence has become an issue demanding multi-systemic attention from our families, communities, schools, local and state government. We are amidst a culture of violence that spreads across multiple domains, and influences children and youth to make decisions that are at the very least, costly and dangerous...and at worst devastating and deadly.

Connecticut Youth Services Association is also in agreement that Youth Violence must be addressed. We must focus on our youth not only as our future, but as our immediate present. Our young people are severely at risk for criminogenic activities, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, school drop-out, and violence in the home, school, and the community. Moreover, behaviors such as these, and in particular violence is an economic liability as city and state funds pay for the aftermath of these behaviors through police and court intervention, out of district residential placement, and incarceration. These problems result in poor bond ratings, higher mill rates, and the lack of business development in distressed urban communities, thereby furthering the economic damage.

It is time for the state of Connecticut to make a serious commitment to addressing the violent nature of its youth, and thereby change the course of so many who are on a path of destruction. Connecticut Youth Services Association and its membership of Youth Service Bureaus and youth serving professionals stand ready to assist the General Assembly in any way that it can. Trained and seasoned, its statewide network of municipal and non-profit agency staff offer support in terms of research, resource development, community involvement, and advocacy to address the needs of youth.

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.

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Youth Service Bureaus exist for the purposes of evaluation, planning, coordination and implementation of prevention, intervention, and treatment services for delinquent and pre-delinquent youth, amongst a host of other youth behaviors addressed in the enabling legislation and statutory mandate of C.G.S. 10-19m-p.

Therefore, in consideration of AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE ON YOUTH VIOLENCE, the Connecticut Youth Services Association and membership Youth Service Bureaus, in carrying out their statutory mission openly and willingly offer to provide any support whatsoever regarding the proposed bill. The Connecticut Youth Services would be pleased to be counted on as a member of the TASK FORCE ON YOUTH VIOLENCE.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony regarding this bill.

Joel Rosenberg,  
Executive Director, AHM Youth Services  
President, Connecticut Youth Services Association

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