



## State of Connecticut

### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATE CAPITOL  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

**REPRESENTATIVE ELIZABETH B. RITTER**  
THIRTY EIGHTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING  
ROOM 3004  
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591  
HOME: (860) 444-1700  
CAPITOL: (860) 240-8585  
TOLL FREE: 1-800-842-8267

E-mail: [Elizabeth.Ritter@cga.ct.gov](mailto:Elizabeth.Ritter@cga.ct.gov)

**CHAIRMAN**  
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

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**Testimony**  
**Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee**  
**Adolescent Health Care in Connecticut**  
**Information Forum and Public Hearing**  
**June 21, 2011**

Good afternoon Senator Fonfara, Representative Rowe, and members of the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee. My name is Elizabeth Ritter, I represent the 38<sup>th</sup> District in the House, and this term I serve as the House Chair of the Committee on Public Health.

Unfortunately family business takes me out of state today and I cannot attend this information forum and public hearing on Adolescent Health Care in Connecticut. You have an impressive list of presenters and I will follow up when I return. I would like to voice my particular concerns when it comes to adolescent health care.

Over and over again, I am impressed by the increasing gravity of three issues confronting our adolescent population:

- Mental health and substance abuse.
- Sexually transmitted diseases and complications from lack of education and treatment.
- Complications of childhood obesity for teens and young adults.

I hope you will spend time examining these issues and Connecticut's position and progress relative to other states and relative to our adolescent population in providing our young people with the best possible opportunities for happy and healthy lives as they grow to adulthood. We have worked hard in previous years to increase efforts to strengthen screening and awareness of mental health and substance abuse issues; provide comprehensive and medically accurate, age-appropriate sex education in Connecticut schools; and improve family and school approaches to healthier diet and exercise. Unfortunately we have a long way to go to reverse this tide. Your work can give us clues to effectiveness of these efforts, tools to use in evaluation, and paths to better solutions.

Thank you for your time and attention, and thank you for your work on this topic.