Testimony
Regarding **Afterschool Funding**
Thursday, February 21, 2013

Matthew Ritter
State Representative
1st Assembly District

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My name is Sharon Tripp and I am the Executive Director of Organized Parents Make A Difference, Inc. We are a non-profit agency that offers after school academic enrichment programs in Hartford Public Schools serving approximately 350 students each school day until 6:00 p.m. To keep cost affordable, the State Afterschool Grant funding is essential.

Our agency serves low income working parents. The bottom line is that if these parents don't have access to quality affordable after school programs then they can't work or the children are left unsupervised. We all know what damage can occur when hundreds of children of all ages are left alone. For a family consisting of a single parent and a child our after-school program cost is $1,500 each year to provide academic and social enrichment for the child. If the parent has no after-school program support and must leave their job, the cost to the state would be upwards of $50,000 according to the CT Department of Social Services guidelines. So, your choice is a mere $1,500 price tag, or a $50,000 price tag. It seems to me the answer is clear.

If you are interested in speaking with a Hartford School parent on this issue contact me and I will put you in touch with someone who can speak from their heart about what after-school programs mean to them and their children.

I ask that you continue to fund the full line item for state-wide after school programming in CT so that OPMAD and many other agencies can continue to offer families the academic and social support their children need to succeed and so that parents can continue to work and will not need State assistance. The loss of this funding would be a high price for the State to pay, but it would be an even higher price for families.

Thank you.