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Wednesday, March 06, 2013 11:56 AM
Rep. Walker, Toni; Harp@senatedems.ct.gov; Bartolomeo@senatedems.ct.gov; Rep.
Abercrombie, Catherine; Rep. Urban, Diana; AppropriationTestimony
Nancy Gentes
Cc:
Subject: Restoration of Fatherhood Funding

Testimony of Deniel Fournier, Associate Manager
Madonna Place, Inc.
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Senators Harp and Bartolomeo, and Representatives Walker, Abercrombie and Urban,

As distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee and Children's Committee, Please note my testimony in opposition to the Governor's budget which eliminates funding for all Fatherhood Initiative programming (community service line item, DSS) and eliminates funding for the Children's Trust Fund Family Empowerment Programs.

Over the past 4 ½ years, I have been an employee of Madonna Place. Our agency is one of the six State Certified sites that provides the Fatherhood Initiative program for fathers. I have witnessed *firsthand* how it has touched so many lives; fathers, children, and the community. Fathers who are seeking to become a more responsible and more involved parent walk through the doors of Madonna Place each day. It is encouraging to see the many different types of fathers come to our Agency for support and guidance on their journey of fatherhood. Through the Fatherhood Initiative program, the fathers are able to engage in 1-1 individual case management services, legal advocacy, as well as parenting classes that are specifically tailored for dads. A success story at its best, is watching a father come to our Agency, perhaps feeling as though there is no hope for him to connect with his child, and watching him become a more involved and connected dad when given the opportunity.

There are many different facets to the Fatherhood program, I believe it would take an insurmountable amount of time and paper to touch on each and every benefit. However I wholeheartedly support the work that the Fatherhood Initiative program does on a daily basis. It is out of my realm of understanding why a funding cut would be considered to Family Empowerment and Fatherhood. Our program at Madonna Place is a prevention program, it would be detrimental to our community and our children's futures to eliminate this program.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.
Deniel Fournier

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