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*Executive Director*

February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Appropriations Committee Testimony  
Legislative Office Building, Room 2702  
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

To whom it may concern:

**On behalf of the Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition (BCAC),** we would like to take this opportunity to thank the Appropriations Subcommittee for their hard work and diligence on such critical budgetary decisions that will ultimately affect thousands of Connecticut constituents and businesses. **As a board member of Career Resources Inc.,** we urge the Appropriations Subcommittee to fund the highly successful STRIVE program.

STRIVE recognizes that many people have never gained the foundational “soft skills” to succeed at their first jobs leading to greater growth. The inability to work cooperatively, handle criticism, or successfully navigate the myriad of spoken and unspoken expectations in any workplace have often meant people lose job after job without understanding why -- or how -- to change.

STRIVE delivers a personalized and practical introduction to the world of work itself.

Serving any Connecticut resident who chooses to participate, regardless of skill level or incarceration history, STRIVE shows outstanding results. The STRIVE program has provided a 400% return on investment for Connecticut tax payers with over 300 graduates placed into full-time employment. They have an 80% placement record with nearly 90% of our clients keeping their jobs after 2 years!

BCAC is a coalition of organizations, parents, and other concerned individuals committed to improving the well-being of Bridgeport’s children and families through research, advocacy, community education, and mobilization. Jobs and job training are critical to the financial stability of our children and their families.

With an extremely lean budget and a proven track record of success, we strongly encourage you to work to keep STRIVE in the budget. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mary Pat Healy

| Executive Director