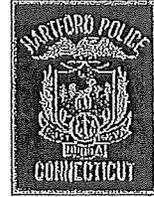




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JAMES C. ROVELLA
CHIEF OF POLICE

**TESTIMONY OF CHIEF JAMES C. ROVELLA, HARTFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT
TO THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE IN SUPPORT OF
H.B. 6703
AN ACT CONCERNING YOUTH VIOLENCE AND GANG ACTIVITY.**

April 15, 2013

Senator Coleman, Representative Fox, and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee., I am currently the Chief of Police of the City of Hartford Connecticut and have been a police officer in excess of thirty-one years in the State of Connecticut. This testimony is submitted on behalf of the **Hartford Police Department** in support of **H.B. 6703, An Act Concerning Youth Violence and Gang Activity.**

The City of Hartford has made great strides in reducing violence. Those advances have been achieved in a variety of different means to include but not limited to; restructuring and re-directing the efforts of the police department, collaboration and cooperation between numerous agencies including other city departments along with our state and federal partners.

The Hartford Police Department has engaged in several different areas outside the normal response to crime and patrol duties, in a positive manner which is beginning to pay dividends in the areas of preventing youth delinquency and gang violence.

Section 2(b) of the raised bill addresses youth services and community based services to identify children and youths at risk of coming into contact with the juvenile system and ways and areas on how to do that.

In the city of Hartford we have already begun to apply a strategy to address these specific concerns such as: Police Athletic League (PAL), PROSPER, Faith Based Ministries, A Special Investigative Division solely dedicated to Domestic Violence and the revamping of our School Resources Officers under DMC (Disproportionate Minority Contact).

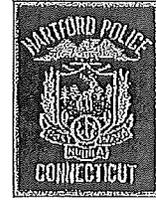
Preventing Recidivism through Organized Supervision, Partnerships, and Enhanced Relationships (PROSPER), the police department, with analytical data, devised a cooperative effort with the Department of Probation. Since 2011, HPD, Community Service Officers (CSO) partner with a Probation officer to handle approximately 80 high-risk clients. There has been a significant reduction in the re-arrest rates in this high-risk population and Officers have noticed an increase in clients enrolling in schools, obtaining driver's licenses and employment. This type of collaboration works due to the random visits and the ability to develop a positive interaction and relationship with the individual's family as well as the individual themselves. This program should be enhanced and grow to include Juvenile offenders.

Police Athletic League (PAL), these children are the cities most at risk population. The children are often from a single parent who is working or trying to work during the times the children are alone or without the supervision of an adult. The parent and the children want that positive interaction with a police officer. The after school program engages children in homework/ schoolwork, athletics, other activities. A nutritious dinner is provided prior to their departure. This program is in need of enhancement and expansion along with site development. Additions to this program include young paid mentors.



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Faith Based Ministries, Their influence and guidance is a force for the reduction or escalation of violence and prevention of youth delinquency. Three Hartford Police Community Service Officers are dedicated to the endeavor on a full time basis, one for each district of the city. The officer's duties and responsibilities include organization, structure and block watch formulation in each of their districts. This endeavor is the forming of a virtual army of devoted individuals willing to engage youth in positive guidance.

Beginning in June, 2013, the Domestic Violence Unit will engage in a very important prevention measures. The unit will identify the children who witness or surround the victim and offender of domestic violence. Those children drive our aggravated assault statistics five, ten and fifteen years down the road because it is a learned behavior. The unit forward those children to services to agencies better equipped to handle future issues such as anger management.

Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) and School Resource Officers (SRO) agreement is requiring schools and police to engage in Memoranda of Agreement (MOAs) in communities where police are stationed within their local public schools, this fosters the collaboration necessary to ensure police officers do not replace school administrators in administering school discipline resulting in arrests for lower level, non-criminal offenses. It ensures that police stationed within schools stay focused on keeping students safe on a daily basis, and not assuming responsibility for the oversight of student discipline. School based arrests have dramatically declined, keeping juveniles out of our criminal justice system at an early age.

The Hartford Police Department already has a model in place to achieve the goals this bill calls for, programs such as these must remain viable and sustainable, if not, then any strides we have made in an individual's life is in jeopardy.

Our commitment to the youth and the citizens of Hartford is all the above and more. These endeavors are specifically tuned to prevention and enhancement of youth rather than reaction and arrest. The city is the focal point for the economic revival and ultimately the survival of the region. I respectfully request the Hartford Police Department be specifically included as a model/pilot program for our ground level initiatives.

I thank you for your time and I will be willing to answer any questions you might have.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James C. Rovella".

James C. Rovella
Chief of Police
Hartford Police Department