



Catholic Charities

Archdiocese of Hartford

April 15, 2013

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 1163- An Act Concerning the Prevention of Urban Youth Delinquency and Violence

Senator Coleman, Representative Fox and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee, I am writing in support of SB 1163.

SB 1163 would provide necessary bonding funds for Catholic Charities to renovate the historic Frank and Katherine Secoll House located at 53 Wadsworth Street in Hartford for the purpose of expanding CC's Institute for the Hispanic Family (IHF), a community based center providing adult and children's mental health services; senior center programming; school readiness; fatherhood services; and intergenerational programs to support families and children in the community.

These comprehensive services address the needs of Hartford's Latino community by providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services to this high need population. Renovation of this building adjacent to the new IHF facility will strengthen the neighborhood, bringing additional services in this community. It will also improve overall neighborhood conditions including creating 12 to 15 jobs during the renovation and 5 new jobs for service delivery. The building will serve as a Therapeutic Preschool, offer parenting class and hold parent meetings' providing services to an additional 75 individuals per year.

Catholic Charities has been providing Early Care and Education services for almost 20 years and currently serves 344 children in 10 state licensed, accredited Early Childhood Education programs funded through the State Department of Education's School Readiness Initiative including 60 Latino children at the Institute for the Hispanic Family's School Readiness program. Studies indicate the quality early learning contributes to success in education in years to follow. In addition, it leads to the decrease of youth delinquency and violence rates.

The Therapeutic Preschool will:

- Provide full-time care with focus on the mental health and educational needs of young children with behavioral challenges that prevent them from functioning in traditional preschools.
- Serve children focusing on low income, Latino children and their families. This is a traditionally underserved population with many risk factors that contribute to children entering kindergarten not ready to learn.

This early intervention model supports the state's new proposed Early Childhood Office by better coordinating services for young children and families, and will improve the child's likelihood of school success and reduce the likelihood that they will require long-term mental health services.

We ask for your support of SB 1163 and thank you for your time.

Respectfully submitted,

Lois Nesci, Chief Executive Officer