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JOINT COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT

February 14, 2013

Testimony of State Representative Juan Candelaria  
Children's Committee

**Re: House Bill #5567, An Act Concerning Children's Mental Health**

Good morning Chairwoman Bartolomeo, Chairwoman Urban and members of the Children's Committee. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to address the committee this morning. I am State Representative Juan Candelaria and I represent the 95th Assembly District in New Haven. I am here to testify in favor of House Bill 5567, An Act Concerning Children's Mental Health.

This bill envisions a children's mental health system that addresses the needs and improves the strengths and competencies of young people within a service delivery system. It is my vision that such system involves youth development and a direct partnership with their families and the community at large.

The emphasis must be directed to early identification and intervention, on the need to engage youth and their families in services as issues related to the child's social and emotional well-being arise. There must be a commitment to treatment approaches that are adequate to families and supported by evidence based success. The mental health system would service and provide support to children and their families from birth to young adult.

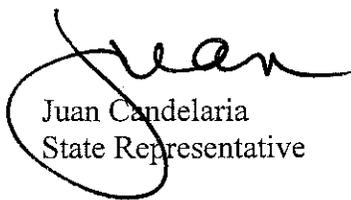
To be effective and serve its purpose the system must include the expansion of early identification and early intervention in normal settings such as FQHCS, School based health clinics, afterschool programs and across all child serving systems. This is achieved by creating educational requirements for all child serving professionals including but not limited to teachers, counselors, pediatricians, nurses, social workers and so on. We must also ensure that as young

people move from system to system that collaboration exists and information is shared amongst all child serving systems.

Another element that is crucial to the success of the system is to invest in family support and engagement in all areas of the child's development, including the identification and treatment process. As we know family is the foundation on which a child's life is built and for that reason we must ensure that they are engaged in the process. In order for that to happen we must increase parent education, and offer family support services and opportunities to enhance families on site. We have to invest funding to contract family support specials at community based and school based health centers.

Lastly, there is a need to increase the use, build capacity and expand training in evidence-based, evidence-informed and promising practices that are effective in community based settings. We must invest and continue to encourage research that is relevant to practice and effective in community base settings.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



Juan Candelaria  
State Representative