

Testimony regarding the Tobacco and Health Trust Fund disbursement recommendations submitted by Don Maletto Director of the Connecticut Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs

Senator Bye, Representative Walker, Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson and Committee members I am here in support of the Tobacco and Health Trust Fund disbursement recommendations. The Boys & Girls Clubs in Connecticut applaud the efforts of the State of Connecticut and the Tobacco and Health Trust Fund Board to combat tobacco and tobacco related product use of children in Connecticut.

Healthy Lifestyles is one of the top three priority outcomes that Boys & Girls Clubs seek to achieve with our members. This disbursement recommendation provides an opportunity for our organization to seek necessary funding to meet our stated outcome.

This year Boys & Girls Clubs in Connecticut received a grant from the Tobacco and Health Trust Fund to organize and implement a new program called "Be Smart, Don't Start." We are very pleased with the progress of the program and look forward to continuing the program over multiple years. We have attracted support outside of the initial investment made by the State of Connecticut that includes our media partner News 8 and corporate sponsor CVS Health. News 8 and CVS Health have indicated they would like to continue in support of the program in 2015. The Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs strongly believes in leveraging investments made by the State with private support. The partnership with CVS Health provides another platform for Boys and Girls Clubs to get the message out to "Be Smart Don't Start." The majority of a young persons life is spent out of school. The out of school time can often be overlooked or thought secondary to the time spent in school, however, if we think about it, this is most likely the time of greatest influence both positive and negative. Boys & Girls Clubs provide opportunities for kids during these out of school time hours and have a positive impact on the children who attend our clubs. This disbursement recommendation rightly takes into consideration out of school time efforts. Boys & Girls Clubs in Connecticut fully support the efforts of Tobacco and Health Trust Fund board and look forward to playing a role in supporting healthy lifestyles for children in Connecticut.