2 March 2015

To Sen. Bye, Rep. Walker, and members of the Appropriations Committee:

I was dismayed to learn that the governor's proposed budget cuts funding for the Parent Leadership Training Institute program. As a 2006 graduate of PLTI and an active member of Wanburip PLTI design team, I have seen how this program has positively effected my community.

Nearly 20 years ago, Connecticut launched PLTI. After many successful years here, the program has expanded beyond the Constitution State. Now that States from Rhode Island to Hawaii have commenced PLTI programs, it would be particularly unfortunate to see the state that launched this nationally acclaimed program give it up in a shortsighted decision.

Please consider reinstating funding for PLTI.

Sincerely,

Avis Hoelck
11 Wilson St.
Danbury
PLTI class of 2006

3-2-15

Dear Senator Bye, Representive Walker,
and members of the Appropriations Committee:

As a Danbury PLTI graduate of 2014 I respectfully submit this request for your consideration to restore funding for the following programs; Community Plans for Early Education, Parent Leadership Training Institute and People Empowering People, Help Me Grow, School Readiness and School Readiness Quality Enhancement Funds, Cut to Danbury Public Schools funding for Before/After School and Summer Programs.

As a graduate I have continued as an advocate in my town's public school systems Special Education; established a special needs parents group and became a mentor/facilitator for People 1st of Connecticut. My project developed as a PLTI member/graduate continues monthly at New Fairfield's Town Library. It reaches child of all ages using Newtown, CT service dogs.

Many graduates continue to serve in leadership roles city wide and school PTO's, student and government, and on state-wide boards, adding to the effectiveness and growth of civic life in Danbury and surrounding towns.

The benefits of PLTI are wide reaching and have

amazing, productive and positive lasting effects on parents, children and our community.

Please strongly review the life changing effectiveness of these programs. Personally it has had a positive effect on myself and my family.

This is an investment in children's lives.

We urge you to restore funding for these programs so that Danbury's children can have the support they need to succeed beginning at birth.

Sincerely,

Dawn Lipke
6 Indian Hill Rd.
New Fairfield, Ct.
06812

March 2nd / 2015

Dear Legislators of Connecticut:

As an immigrant parent and a connecticut resident, I'm writting to you because my concern about funding cuts in relation early education and programs that are benefitial to communities all around connecticut.

The Lack of Knowledge about "the system" and the amount of information many times available in English, make almost imposible for immigrant parents to be involve and related to their children.

Having an Elementary school student at home, made me look for opportunities to Educate myself and benefit from available programs whithin My own community. I was acepted to do the PCTI Program in Danbury and during 9 weeks, my son and I were immerse on an amating Experience getting to know agencies, School, city and state Organisms related with early and Elementary education.

When I talk about the benefit of the program to hispanics, they usually get

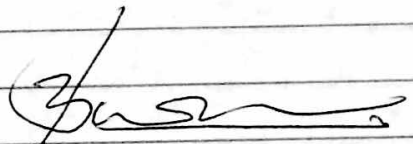
interested and follow up with Danbury Children first. In Fact, I have so many families asking about simple things such as what is a pta? simple things that for someone that no speak or understand English, can be the difference between being part of their children lifes or not.

We need oportunnities to asimilate and integrate in the American culture, It is not only about speaking the language, It is also about understanding how the goverment and the system works. Almost 45% of students in the Danbury school system are hisparics but only about 2% are represented at any level of the public Organisms. PLTI has been a great catalizer that ignites community service, Only in Danbury over 200 of these projects has made a sostardiac effect among communities. I could mention my own project that has benefited 90 students and I hope to involved at least 90 more for 2015.

Besides being part of the PLTI program, and Graduating in 2012, student are still connected and checking on each others projects, This type of "Network" is what communities are made of,

I really hope other parents could have a similar opportunity to be involved in their communities. I especially advocate for minorities and inmigrants that are eager to built a strong community for their own families.

Please contact me if you have any questions or if my testimony can "enligth" and promote a benefit for communities around connecticut.



Miguel Barreto
2014 PCIE Graduate, Inmigrant of the year, 2014.
48 Huntington court
Betrel CT 06801.
203. 2467346.

March 2, 2015

Dear Senator Bye, Representative Walker and Members of the Appropriations Committee,

I am writing this letter on behalf of the more than 700 parent graduates of parent leadership programs, just in the City of Danbury - to ask you to restore funding for the Parent Trust Fund. To my surprise, the Parent Trust Fund was completely cut from the Governor's 2015-2016 budget.

The Parent Trust Fund is the first-ever family civics fund focused solely on offering civics leadership skill-building to improve the health, safety and learning outcomes of CT children. Here, CT is a national leader. Other states look to the work of CT as an example of excellence.

Family leaders across this state have benefitted from the programs the Parent Trust Fund has helped support. It is not a sole funding source. Rather it is matched by funds garnered locally in cities and towns.

Since 1998, Danbury has offered civics leadership trainings to adults who wish to positively influence the lives of children. Parent Leadership is defined as:

"The capacity to interact in civic society with positive outcomes for Children."

No where else is family civics leadership training offered. It is distinct and unique. We are reminded of our rights, our obligation, to participate in our democracy. Beyond that, research proves that parent involvement has a significant positive impact on child outcomes. The Parent Trust 'funds' programs that enable parents become leaders and advocates to all children.

Communities have been impacted with improved services and programs. In Danbury, the community has benefitted by PLTI-led programs for Soccer and Swim lessons for Children with Special Needs. Graduates run for public office (and win!), seek to serve on Boards and Commissions, advocate on behalf of others.

Parent leadership programs have been studied, and evaluated. Grads have said that:

99% are better able to access

information to navigate their Community;
73% are engaged in advocacy;
more than 15,000 hours of community service were completed by those graduating in 2014 alone.

Please restore funding for The Parent Trust Fund. The Glaustein Memorial fund will match a portion of the funds promised by the State. To cut the Parent Trust fund is irresponsible. Families gain, and Communities gain from the parent leadership programs funded through Parent Trust.

I welcome an opportunity to discuss this further.

Sincerely
Patricia P. Keckeisen

Patricia P. Keckeisen
01 Seminole Drive
Danbury, CT 06811-4442

203-797-1484

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March 2, 2015

In May 2014, I stood proudly with the graduating class of PLTI Danbury. I held a certificate of completion in my hand and I cannot begin to describe the sense of pride and accomplishment that I felt that day. The parents with whom I trained with the past 20 weeks were not just ordinary parents. I was humbled to realize what extraordinary individuals I had the pleasure to meet and get to know because each of us, coming from diverse backgrounds and various nationalities persevered in finishing PLTI's outstanding leadership course for a special reason.

It is not easy to come to class every week and focus on learning how to become a better member of our community, a better parent, when there are more pressing issues that cannot wait. Bills to pay, a family to feed and educate.

But we showed up and we painstakingly learned, especially to those of us who spoke a different language, it was difficult to communicate ideas, hopes and strategies.

Parents brought their children to class to set an example of learning and become role models for other children.

As parents, we all realize the innumerable challenges that we face in raising our children in a world filled with so many issues and threats on a daily basis. It is a world where the security of our children is not assured. A world where there are cyber, bullying and economic issues, the breakdown of family structure, drugs and unfathomable violence. Children and families have become targets for reasons that defy logic and common sense. These daily threats are real, relentless and will only worsen in the future.

We live in a world wherein what's going on in other parts of the world is no longer just confined within those countries. The abysmal living conditions and radical mindset created such societies and today there no boundaries. Like it or not, this global environment is part of our community, our state, our country.

PLTI is an organization made up of parents who strive to become leaders because there is a need for it. Studies have shown time and time again that parents who are NOT involved in their children and families set up a precedent for failure and breakdown of a family as a unit.

PLTI recruiting parents to take the lead in not only becoming involved in their own families but to give back to their communities is a win-win situation for all our children, parents and families but ultimately the city of Danbury, the state of Connecticut and the entire country.

Danbury is a strong community because we have an able and dedicated leadership. It is also a growing community that resembles an extraordinary example of a working global community with it's diversity and learning to get along despite it's differences.

PLTI Danbury is an exact reflection of all that. To eliminate this outstanding program due to budget cuts is incomprehensible and a game changer. PLTI is one of those programs that has been a gift to families and the community, and it keeps on giving from generation to generation.

I am a proud PLTI 2014 graduate. I was given extraordinary skills as a parent leader in my community through the PLTI program. Before PLTI, I did not realize the power I had as an

ordinary citizen to make a difference. What I do as an individual creates a chain reaction that affects other members in my community. My anti-bullying project is an excellent example of what it is like to find my voice as a parent leader which will impact my community for years to come.

As a parent leader, I voted for Governor Dannel P. Malloy. I believed in his leadership and commitment to families. I know that if the Governor was aware of the unique and positive impact the PLTI program has generated together with other programs under the CT Commission on Children, he will do everything in his power to balance the state budget without eliminating PLTI. Otherwise, the loss would be immeasurable.

I have every confidence and hope that Governor Malloy will do the right thing, because he truly cares for families not only in Danbury and their strong support of him, but because it is the right thing to do for the state of Connecticut.

I am also a proud mother of a beautiful 16 year old daughter, Alexandra. Alexandra volunteered in teaching the PLTI children regarding the structure of government and various aspects of my anti-bullying project. Together with my husband Jeff, we have been "hands on" in raising our child. My husband and I are very proud that Alexandra just completed her stint as United States Senate Page in Washington DC under the appointment of Senator Chris Murphy.

Sandra Prendergast
Danbury PLTI 2014

March 2, 2015

To Sen Bye, Rep Walker
+ Members of the Appropriations Committee:

This is written testimony on behalf of families from Danbury. I seek to restore funding for the following programs, which have been cut from the governor's 2015-16 budget.

I am a graduate of the Danbury Parent Leadership Training Institute and have seen first-hand the difference it makes for kids, parents and the community as a whole. As part of my participation, I was able to hold "Book Nights" at a local elementary school and provide new books to each student who attended. I got donations of books from Scholastic and recruited community leaders to read and share stories. I now sit on the group's Design Committee to help other parents take part in this amazing program to learn to advocate for all children in the community.

I also seek funds for the Community Plans for Early Education - known locally as Danbury's Promise for Children. I am a parent member of this important group which brings together all facets of the city to better serve our youngest members and ensure they are on the road to success in school.

Danbury also faces cuts for its before and afters school programs as well as its summer programs. These programs are far too important to our city to cut. These programs offer tutoring, homework help and childcare for families. And the summer program has succeeded in stabilizing test scores for Danbury students, erasing the summer slide seen by many students without enriching summer programs.

Many of these programs receive private donations in the form of matching funds. In the case of PLTI, the funding comes from the Parent Trust Fund. The elimination of the $500,000 budget would also end a $25,000 matching grant from the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund. This generous donation supports programs and parents statewide. The state of Connecticut should take steps to use that amount of matching funds.

The Parent Trust fund dollars are an important part of our Democracy. Parents learn to advocate for their children - the people in society who most need a voice.

Sincerely,

Karen Tensa

March 2, 2015

Dear Legislators,

My name is Katherine Mercer, and I am a parent leader. I am a 2008 graduate of the Danbury Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) and I am writing to you today to request that the legislature restore funding to the Parent Trust Fund, so that programs like PLTI, PEP, PSEE can continue.

These leadership programs are important, as they help the communities that they serve by generating a population of skilled volunteers who have the tools to make the changes they seek. PLTI is one of the ways that the State of CT can help to solve our many social issues, by training parents to be able to define and solve the problems facing our children/families. Truly, PLTI is an asset to communities and our state, as graduates go on to complete community projects that benefit so many. In 2008, I created a program called Preschool Open Gym at the local Police Activities League building. That program served several hundred families over the four years that it ran, and it would not

have happened were it not for the PLTI program showing me the impact I could have as a parent. Since that time, I have gone on to take a board position at my children's school, have led numerous fundraising events, and generally have stepped in wherever necessary because I recognize the power I have as a parent to be an agent of change.

I ask you to please reinstate funding for the Parent Trust Fund, so that future generations of parent leaders can be trained to be the difference makers in our communities. Our state will be the better for it.

Respectfully submitted,

Katherine Graber
2 Tobins Ct.
Danbury, CT 06810

March 2, 2015

Senator Bye, Representative Walker & App. Comm

I am writing this letter as a graduate of the Parent Leadership Training Institute (Class of 1999) in hopes that funding to the program will be restored. Cutting funds from this program is detrimental to communities around the state.

The Parent Leadership Training Institute program provides training for parents to gain tools both in civics and community to advocate for all children. Parents become positive change agents and gain a voice in the community as leaders for children and families.

As a result of the training parents graduate to go on and serve on Boards of Education, Councils, and various committees working to better the lives of children and families. Many go on to continue their education and better their own life

circumstances and as a result the lives of children are improved. Parents also become more confident, become more involved in the school system. They learn how systems work both on a local and state level.

Cutting funds for the PLTI program will close doors to many parents who may otherwise gain insight to how they can improve lives of children and without these funds would not be heard.

Please do not cut funds to PLTI programs and close doors for many. Education is power, parents want and deserve a voice —.

Thank You
Carolyn Meinar
Danbury, CT.
Former PLTI Chairperson