

**Testimony of Sergeant Carol Ogrinc, Police Officer  
concerning funding for Regional Action Councils in**

H.B. No. 6824 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING  
JUNE THIRTIETH 2017, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR AND OTHER  
PROVISIONS RELATED TO REVENUE.

*Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services - March 6, 2015*

Senator Bye, Representative Walker, Senator Gerratana, Representative Dillon and members of the Appropriations subcommittee, my name is Sergeant Carol Ogrinc. I am offering testimony in strong opposition to the proposed cuts to the regional action councils.

In my community the role of Communities 4 Action (formerly Lower Fairfield County Regional Action Council) has been an absolute integral part of educating parents and youths about substance abuse prevention as they have kept up with the ever-changing trends which involve illegal substances. The Regional Action Councils are active and involved in a number of activities such as, but not limited to; community needs assessments, media advocacy and legislative advocacy, substance abuse awareness, grant collaboration and provide biannual epidemiologic report of substance use/abuse and recommendations for changes to the community environment.

I have been a police officer for 27 years and the New Canaan Police Department's Youth Officer for the last 9 years. I have worked closely with our Regional Action Council since I became Youth Officer. Those involved work tirelessly and are so dedicated to keeping our communities informed and most of all safe. Many of the programs in place today are there because of the hard work and initiative taken by the Regional Action Council. The Medication Drop Box Program is a huge success and has taken unwanted and unused prescription drugs out of the hands of our youth. With the Regional Action Council taking the lead, New Canaan implemented the Medication Drop Box Program in June 2011. Since that time we have collected approximately 1,240 pounds of prescription and over the counter medication. Because of the rise in opiate overdoses, our Regional Action Council spent the last few years researching and lobbying for Naloxone to be carried by police officers and EMT's in Connecticut. Thanks to the Governor and the support of our State Representatives police officers and EMT's in New Canaan (and in other communities) have been trained and certified in the use of Narcan for those that overdose on opiates. With both programs just talked about, the Regional Action Council has done so much of the "leg work" that not many people know about or ever find out about. They recognize that the most important part of these programs is their implementation, which ultimately leads to our communities being safer. I strongly urge you to continue funding our Regional Action Councils without making cuts. They are critical part of helping our parents and youth stay safe and alive.

Thank you.

Respectfully,  
Sergeant Carol Ogrinc