

**Testimony of Amy Badini, Parent and Chair of the Regional Youth Network,  
Communities 4 Action,  
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 Amy Badini I am offering testimony in strong opposition to the proposed cuts to the regional action councils.

In my community, Communities 4 Action (formerly Lower Fairfield County Regional Action Council), has been a tremendous source of support in our efforts to keep our community safe. Through their publications, The Power of Parents (on Alcohol, Marijuana, and Prescription Drugs), they have educated and supported parents efforts to keep their kids safe. They have given mini-grants to students to attend SADD (Students Against Destructive Decision) National Conferences. By doing this, those students learn successful prevention activities that they bring back into their communities. They have been a resource connecting agencies to our community for lectures, materials, etc. One of the biggest impacts is the coordination and organization of the Drug Take Back program that is now fully operational in the police stations around the state. Not only does this program take unused drugs, ripe for potential abuse, out of the home, it also destroys them in an environmentally safe way. Being a state on the water, keeping our waters clean is of utmost importance, and a nice benefit of this program. Of course, these are only a few examples of how Communities 4 Action directly supports our efforts to keep our community safe.

I have been involved with Communities 4 Action since my oldest (now a sophomore in college) was in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. I'm sure you are all aware of the Birth to Three Program of Early Intervention that we have in the state of Connecticut. We have this program because we are keenly aware of the success of early intervention. It is a huge cost savings to our state. Without it, many of these children would require very expensive life-long services. I became involved when my oldest was 9 years-old because I knew that prevention works. My now 20 year-old is a thriving sophomore in college and has never tried alcohol or other drugs. While you may think he is unique, I would argue that it is because of the work of these regional action councils in educating and supporting parents to keep their kids safe is the true reason he has chosen to abstain.

As you may be aware, for every dollar spent in prevention, you save \$10 in intervention and treatment. Too many parents are still struggling with keeping their kids safe. Cutting this budget will not only cost the state in the long run, it is actively showing parents that this state does not support them in their efforts to keep their kids safe. I strongly urge you to vote against any cuts to these desperately needed councils whose work is invaluable. Isn't one saved life worth it?

Thank you.

Amy

Parent (20 yrs., 17 yrs., & 14 yrs.)

Chair of the Regional Youth Network, Communities 4 Action

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