



**Testimony of Robert Brex, Executive Director, Northeast Communities Against Substance Abuse**

***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 and members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Bob Brex and I am the Executive Director of Northeast Communities Against Substance Abuse (NECASA), one of the Regional Action Councils (RACs) for Northeast Connecticut and a member of the Connecticut Prevention Network.

NECASA has for 25 years provided both financial and technical assistance to the twenty-one towns in our region. We have brought 2.5 Million dollars into the region as an organization and we have helped other organizations in the region realize an additional 2.5 million dollars in grants through our mentoring and support. This is all in addition to the state funds provided to us.

Over the years, NECASA has:

- \* Provided one million dollars to Local Prevention Councils in the region
- \* purchased evidence-based health curriculums and funded teacher training in ten school districts in Northeast Connecticut.
- \* Helped Establish a Drug Intervention Program in the Danielson Superior Court
- \* Established two Drug Endangered Children's Alliances in Windham and Brooklyn/Killingly
- \* Mentored the Town of Putnam and the Town of Windham so that they could receive their own Federal Drug-Free grants, total funding once completed will be over one million dollars each.

\* Conducted school surveys and provided analysis to schools in the region and then provided stipends for projects in the schools.

This is in addition to continuing to do the planning for the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services on both prevention and treatment for the region.

The proposed budget before you is short-sighted and ill-advised. It devastates the prevention infrastructure of Connecticut. The State's Regional Action Councils are a large part of that infrastructure with our ability to reach diverse and varied sectors of the communities we serve. The RACs do not do this work in a vacuum but work with other members of the infrastructure such as the Governor's prevention Partnership, the Connecticut Clearinghouse and Youth Service Bureaus and also locally with the schools, colleges, hospitals, police, businesses and agencies to educate and prevent substance abuse and stop it from becoming an even greater problem. Should this budget be adopted as it is proposed it will cripple prevention in our state and leave us with a task of reacting to drug crisis after drug crisis.

Thank you for your time and attention.