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Dear Senator Gerratana/Representative Dillon,

It is without hesitation that I write this letter to express my grave concerns regarding the drastic funding cuts to the Regional Action Councils, specifically the Southeastern Regional Action Council (SERAC), as outlined in Governor Malloy's proposed budget. The projected prevention funding cuts would reduce the overall budget of the Regional Action Council's by \$775,000, significantly impacting the numerous resources and services that SERAC provides to the 20 towns located in southeastern Connecticut.

SERAC is a community based agency which raises awareness, provides education, prevention and advocacy to youth, families and the entire community to reduce the impact of addiction and related risky behaviors. In my role as a school psychologist, I work with families, educators, and other professionals to strengthen the connections between home, school and the community, in an effort to support children's academic, social, behavioral and emotional growth and success. I strongly value SERAC as a professional resource and partner in these efforts! A number of my colleagues and I have undergone trainings in Suicide Prevention and Youth and Adult Mental Health First Aid, as well as discussions on regional drug trends and prevention initiatives. I always look forward to bringing a group of middle school students to SERAC's Annual Youth Forum, and frequently hear positive feedback from my high school students that are involved with the ALLI program. SERAC's efforts to affect public policy decisions regarding substance abuse prevention and harm reduction, is certainly commendable. I was thrilled to join SERAC's Board of Director's in 2014, as I truly believe the work they do has a positive impact in our region.

I strongly encourage you to reconsider the aforementioned funding cuts, and restore the funding for the Regional Action Councils.

Thank you,

Carley Higginbotham