

March 6, 2015

Dear members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Kristen Creston. I reside in the town of West Haven and I am incredibly concerned with Governor Malloy's budget cut to the Tobacco and Health Trust Fund (THTF) in his budget.

This decision to zero out all funds to the THTF will gravely impact our state and the town of West Haven. Tobacco related diseases are the single most preventable cause of death in our society, yet according to DPH statistics, tobacco use continues to kill more people in Connecticut each year than alcohol, AIDS, car crashes, illegal drugs, accidents, murders and suicides combined.

The funding of tobacco prevention and cessation programs are proven to help people quit smoking. Without these programs, our state will see nearly 5,000 friends, family members, and neighbors die each year of smoking related disease. If nothing is done do fund the THTF 56,000 kids now under 18 and alive in Connecticut will ultimately die prematurely from smoking.

It is so difficult to quit smoking. Many try every day, but fail to break the addictive habit, in part, of a lack of access to successful cessation programs. Funding tobacco use prevention and cessation programs that alleviate this burden on our citizens and economy are not only consistent with our shared goal of insuring access to care to those in need, it is also the only fiscally responsible approach we can take.

Thank you for considering my concerns to the cut to the Tobacco and Health Trust Fund.

Sincerely,

Kristen Creston