

February 24, 2015

To: Education Committee

From: Andrew Greenlaw  
Senior, RHAM High School

Re: Education Issues  
Interdistrict Cooperative Grant Program  
S.B. No. 942, Section 16, Subsection (a)

Dear Education Committee Members,

My name is Andrew Greenlaw and I am here addressing Senate Bill #942 in regards to Project Oceanology.

Six years ago I began attending Project Oceanology during the summer as a camper interested in the ocean. My first two years I attended a week long camp called Ocean Camp. Here campers not only had a chance to learn many of the basics of Marine Science but at the same time were able to have fun and make new friends. I can't think of many other places where kids have an opportunity to go out into nature and learn, hands on let alone at a summer camp where they are having fun. After spending two great years at Ocean Camp I grew an interest for Marine Science and wanted to expand my knowledge. This is when I began attending another one of Project Oceanology's camps called the Ocean Diversity Institute. This is a grant funded four week summer camp where kids from all walks of life have an opportunity to attend and explore their interest in Marine Science. This camp allows kids to take an even deeper step into marine science where they have the opportunity to conduct their own research in the Long Island Sound Estuary and then turn it into a formal lab report they would later present. This shows kids how to conduct scientific research by collecting data, analyzing the data, create a formal lab report, and present our work publicly.

Perhaps most importantly though is the fact that the Ocean Diversity Institute develops a child's leadership skills, an attribute anyone needs no matter what path they choose in life. It doesn't matter the gender, race, religion, or financial status of a family all children are welcome to attend which is completely made possible through this financial grant. Without this grant my family and many other families would not have been able to send their kids to this amazing program. I can honestly say that without this grant funding Project Oceanology's camps, I would be nowhere close to where I am today. Before I was a camper at Project Oceanology, I had

many issues ranging from low self-esteem, poor grades to living an unhealthy life style. My parents, at this point, had great concern for my future and the direction I was headed. Project Oceanology's Grant funded summer camps; didn't just impact my life, they gave me a new one. Since beginning Project Oceanology, I've developed the life skill sets for learning, communication and leadership. These skill sets, along with the necessary building blocks; accountability, integrity and confidence has enabled me to maintain honors all throughout high school, rebuild relationships with my family, play two varsity sports and achieve acceptance into UCONN Avery Point, majoring in Marine Biology. Project Oceanology gave me a new life and I want to make sure that other kids out there many of which who were lost like I was and may not be able to pay for this amazing camp get the same opportunity that I was given. As great as Project Oceanology's camps are, most families don't have the money to send their kids. This grant is the only way that these kids will get the opportunity to experience fun hands on science while developing attributes such as leadership skills that they will use for the rest of their lives.

Thank you for your time.