

Date: February 28, 2015

To: CT Appropriations Committee

From: Jessica Morozowich, Concerned Parent, Member Moms Club of Colchester and Lebanonon

Re: Testimony support of Bill 6004, and Restoring Funds for Community Plans for Early Childhood

Dear State Representatives,

A year ago my husband and I relocated to Colchester CT from the Northwest Corner with our two small children. Having grown-up in the rolling hills of Litchfield County I was concerned that we would not be able to find a town with the same quintessential New England feeling, a town that put as much importance on family and children, and had resources and support for those families above and beyond the public school system. **What drove us to select Colchester among other towns in the surrounding area was #1 – The quality of the public school system, #2 – The Collaborative for Colchester’s Children (C3).** I knew that this **local collaborative dedicated to ensuring Healthy, Happy and Successful children in our community, would be an essential asset to helping my family adjust to our new town.**

My family and I moved to Colchester in the winter of 2014, one of the worst winters on record. I was a women transitioning from the professional world to being a stay-at-home Mom to two little ones. I lived in a new town with no friends, no family, and was essentially locked in my house for three months of bad weather. C3 was my savior they...

- **connected me with the local Moms Club,**
- **registered me for a free music class offered by C3,**
- **signed my husband and I up for a parenting workshop helping us deal with our strong-willed toddler,**
- **coordinated getting my daughter screened for Preschool ,**
- **and we attended the Preschool Expo, coordinated by C3, where we met all the area schools and were able to comfortably select the right program for her.**

Within two months I went from town “newbie” to a fully involved member of the Colchester community.

These councils were initially funded through a private-public partnership between the State of CT, the Graustein Memorial Fund, and the Children's Fund of CT. The private funders challenged the State to match its funds and help Discovery communities implement strategies focused on children age 8 and under. **In the states 2015-16 budget proposal these funds have been eliminated entirely!** This would mean a debilitating loss of \$90,000 for C3.

I understand the enormity of identifying solutions to the State's financial challenges, and respect the fact that everyone must share the burden and responsibility of the needed reductions. However, crippling, to the point of eminent elimination, many of these programs that have bolstered towns and families across the state is not the answer. Therefore I ask that you support Bill 6004, and help continue funding of the Community Plans for Early Childhood (\$750,000) and Improving Early Literacy lines (\$150,000). **If the state funds the above amount, private funders will MATCH those dollars with an additional \$1,175,000. This is a smart investment in our families and children!**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jessica Morozowich

Jessica Morozowich, Colchester Resident

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