

Testimony for March 3, 5pm for the Appropriations Secondary Education Sub-committee

Senator Bye, Representative Walker, Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Secondary Education Sub-committee: My name is Cindy Alvarez and I am the Program Coordinator for teen programs at the New London Youth Service Bureau, referred to as New London Youth Affairs.

Thank you for supporting the success of children and families in Connecticut communities. I am very concerned about the impact that the proposed deep budget cuts for Youth Service Bureaus will have on New London youth and families.

On behalf of the New London Youth Service Bureau, referred to as New London Youth Affairs, I am requesting that you:

1. Restore the proposed funding cut from the Department of Education Youth Service Bureau Cost Sharing Grant.
2. Restore funding to the eliminated Department of Education Enhancement grant line item.
3. Maintain Youth Service Bureaus within the Department of Education; not within the Department of Children and Families management.

I coordinate the New London Youth Affairs Teens in Action program, targeting high school graduation and employability. High school graduation is a tremendous indicator of future employment; New London's graduation rate is significantly lower than the statewide rate. Last year, 100% of Teens in Action members completed the community service high school graduation requirement.

Teens in Action objectives include:

1. Teens will complete the credits required to promote to the next grade, therefore progressing toward high school graduation.
2. Teens will maintain and/or improve their grades from the first semester to the final semester, thereby assuring progress toward graduation.
3. Teens will receive work readiness training preparing them to succeed in employment.
4. Teens will meet the community service requirement for high school graduation.
5. Teens will become prepared for post-secondary options.

I vehemently request your support to restore funding to Youth Service Bureaus, thereby contributing to essential services for New London children. Thank you for your involved efforts for strengthening teens' positive opportunities and experiences.