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BILL FINCH
Mayor

February 26, 2015

Joint Committee on Higher Education
and Employment Advancement
Connecticut General Assembly
Legislative Office Building, Room 3600
300 Capital Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

**Re: H.B. 6116: AN ACT INCREASING THE NUMBER OF INTERNSHIPS AND
SUMMER JOBS FOR LOW-INCOME YOUTH THROUGHOUT
CONNECTICUT.**

Thank you Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Willis, and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify before you today. I'm here to support an act regarding an increase in the number of internships and summer jobs for low-income youth in Connecticut.

In Bridgeport, we are creating jobs today while preparing our kids for the jobs of tomorrow. One way we are doing this is with a strong summer jobs program.

Last summer alone we created nearly 300 summer jobs in Bridgeport. But we believe this is only the start, and that's why we're here today to support legislation aimed at creating more summer jobs in Bridgeport and across the state.

As the father of four kids – two who have graduated from Bridgeport public schools and two who are currently attending – I know first-hand the importance of youth summer employment opportunities.

Research is clear that these summer job opportunities for kids make a major difference in their future success. High school graduation rates go up for kids with work experience, according to Pew Charitable Trusts. And, for every year a teenager works, their income in their twenties increases by around 15 percent, according to research from Northeastern University.

Summer employment opportunities provide a structured environment for kids in Bridgeport to stay safe, secure, and learn invaluable lessons that translate into future success and prosperity.

In Chicago, Illinois, a recent study found that an inner-city summer jobs program for high school kids contributed to a significant decrease in violent crime.

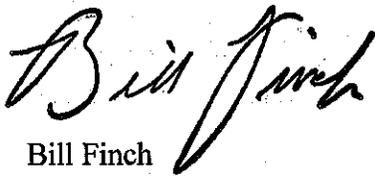
In Bridgeport, Connecticut, we have been expanding our summer job programs, which has contributed to our city seeing its lowest violent crime rate in nearly 40 years.

It has also contributed to our state's largest city having the largest decrease in violent crime in New England.

The bottom line is that summer employment programs for kids today serves as vital preparation for ensuring our kids are prepared to compete for the jobs of tomorrow.

I urge members of the committee to join me in supporting this bill. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Finch". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "B" and "F".

Bill Finch
Mayor