

Written Testimony of Tammy Alferi, Director of Finance & Administration
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240 Main Street
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Public Hearing – February 11, 2016
Public Hearing on the Governor's Proposed Budget

Good afternoon Senator Bye, Representative Walker and distinguished Committee Members,

My name is Tammy Alferi and I am the Director of Finance & Administration at Madonna Place in Norwich. Our agency is a nonprofit that serves over 3000 parents and children each year from New London County.

My testimony is in opposition to the proposed Elimination of the Fatherhood Initiative programs.

I have worked at Madonna Place for over seven years and have seen State funding for Fatherhood Initiative programs on the chopping block every year. While it has never been completely eliminated in that time, it has diminished significantly from the former levels of support received by the six certified Fatherhood Initiative programs throughout the state.

The idea of eliminating a time-tested, results-producing, effective prevention program like this astonishes me. The related statistics indicate the importance of having the father/father figure involved in a child's life in terms of increasing school attendance, reduction in drug use and incarceration, and improved self-esteem for the child.

With the small amounts of funding we currently receive, our Fatherhood staff are able to do great things:

- 24/7 Dad groups educate fathers about the importance of co-parenting with the other parent, the daily needs of the child, the emotional and physical support required to raise a happy, healthy child and the steps needed for improved child development
- FI staff help coach and prepare dads in the job-seeking process by assisting them with resume writing, interview skills and clothing, job postings
- Staff offer court advocacy in child support and visitation hearings
- On-going individual Case Management provides dads with reinforcement of concepts learned in the group setting

Each year, dads who have benefitted from our services come to testify on our behalf because they truly believe these services have made a difference in their lives. And isn't that the goal? Let's support those who need a little guidance so they can become better fathers and help to raise happy and healthy children, who then become productive members of our community.

I ask you to invest in prevention, not incarceration.

Thank you.