

**Appropriations Committee Public Hearing on the Governor's Proposed Budget  
Adjustments for Human Services Agencies  
H.B. No. 5044, An Act Making Adjustments To State Expenditures For The Fiscal Year**

*Shannon Ryan  
Teen Outreach Program Facilitator of Family Centered Services of CT*

February 11, 2016

Distinguished Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition regarding the Governor's Proposed Budget Adjustments.

My name is Shannon Ryan and I am a facilitator for the Teen Outreach Program at Family Centered Services of CT, in New Haven. In collaboration with the Department of Social Services Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative, our program services approximately 200 of the 800 students serviced statewide by the TOP program. We facilitate an evidence based curriculum in 4 public schools in the greater New Haven and Bridgeport areas.

Our teens meet with us 2-3 times a week from during the school year for curriculum guided discussions about youth development, community involvement, service learning, and pregnancy prevention. The Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative program is designed to attract and retain youth most at risk for early pregnancy.

The total annual statewide fiscal year 2016 budget for the Statewide TPPI is \$1.72 million, which includes independent evaluation, ongoing program monitoring, staff training and program operations. We are spending approximately \$2,254 per student per school year, but the state will pay far more in the long term for teen mothers who participate in public assistance programs, child welfare, criminal justice, and public health systems.

In my opinion, DSS has established a solid methodology for TPPI funding that should continue to be applied as the state contract requirements and outcome measures were met or exceeded consistently.

Our students make a real connection with us and look forward to our class time together. They are comfortable enough to ask us questions that they do not want to ask their parents or teachers. We treat every question with an open mind and a wealth of knowledge to ensure that our students are informed, and more importantly, correctly informed about sex and what can happen if they engage in unprotected sex.

I would ask you to reconsider these budget adjustments as we have already taken a substantial budget cut over the last year. Our program is still needed and wanted by students in our neediest communities. To cut our budget any more would mean to cut the chances of a student receiving the education and guidance they need to prevent a teen pregnancy.

Thank you for your time,

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