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Executive Director  
Boys & Girls Club of Redding-Easton

H.B. No. 5044 AN ACT MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO STATE EXPENDITURES FOR THE  
FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2017.

Appropriations Committee  
February 16, 2016

Senator Bye, Representative Walker and committee members thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs, and in particular the Boys & Girls Club of Redding-Easton, to discuss the proposed elimination of the Neighborhood Youth Center Grant. The elimination of this grant will have a very significant negative impact on our Club. It will result in a reduction of already minimal staffing hours, the elimination of certain programs aimed at promoting community service and healthy life styles, and a reduction of the number of children served at our Club. Our Club's share of the NYC Grant dollars allocated to the CT Alliance is relatively small at about \$31,000, but the impact of this cut will absolutely threaten our financial viability and that of the other CT Alliance Clubs. That figure represents one third of our outside fundraising and it is impossible to imagine how it would be replaced.

The Redding-Easton Club has been operating since 1939 and currently serves 550 young people in the towns of Redding and Easton. We utilize funding from the Neighborhood Youth Center Grant to implement programs designed to improve academic success, develop healthy lifestyles and build good character and citizenship in our members. These programs and others like them enable our clubs to extend and reinforce what is being taught in our schools. Following is a list of programs and participant numbers which the NYC grant helps to support at our Club: Keystone Club - 39; Torch Club - 22; Annual Spelling Bee - Spellers 57, Mentors 57; Basketball 110; Field Hockey- 78; Baseball - Spring 130, Summer - 28, Fall - 94; Softball - Spring 66, Summer 14, Fall 18, Rockets (full year) - 35; Tennis -20; Wrestling - 21.

We are fortunate in Redding and Easton to have a good school system that does a good job preparing our members for college and the world beyond our small towns but we are not immune to the challenges of substance abuse and mental health issues which young people everywhere face. For that reason we focus our efforts on providing our members with opportunities to make healthy choices for themselves and their community. The budget Governor Malloy has presented threatens our efforts to provide healthy choices by eliminating all funding from the Neighborhood Youth Center Grant. Please consider restoring the Neighborhood Youth Center funding and let us continue working to provide "Great Futures" for the children of Connecticut. Thank you for your consideration.