



The Connection

Community-based Services, Advocacy
and Research for Connecticut

TO: Members of the Appropriations Committee

From: Patrick Fallon, Service Area Director of Community Justice, The Connection

Re: Appropriations Committee Public Hearing on *H.B. 5044 AN ACT MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO STATE EXPENDATURES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2017 – DOC & JUD Budgets*

Date: February 19, 2016

Members of the Appropriations Committee,

The following testimony is presented on behalf of The Connection, Community Justice Division who are proud partners with Department of Corrections (DOC), Court Support Services Division (CSSD) of the Judicial Branch; and the countless lives positively affected by the services we provide. The Connection is a statewide human service and community development agency offering unique solutions to the problems of homelessness, mental illness, substance use and community justice rehabilitation.

The Connection supports Governor Malloy's proposed 'Second Chance Society 2.0.' This initiative provides a fresh approach to Community Justice which is proving effective. This is evidenced by the progress being made in reducing the state's crime rate, (which, in 2015, was at a 48-year low). A crucial component in this crime reduction is community-based, reentry and diversion services. These services have proven far more cost effective than incarceration.

In the Governor's 2017 proposed midterm budget DOC is slated for cuts totaling \$68 million and the CSSD proposed budget cuts are \$70 million. It is our belief these cuts would have a negative impact on public safety and cost effectiveness for taxpayers. We do not envy the position of either the Administration or the legislature in putting together a balanced spending and revenue package. The task is monumental. But as you work together to put forward the best package possible for the citizens of the state we wanted to provide you with some insight to the people served behind the line items.

In 2015 The Connection served over 2,500 individuals through our partnership with DOC and CSSD. These services include a diverse array of programs including community release halfway houses, reentry scattered housing, as well as inpatient, outpatient and day reporting programs for sex offenders. The goal of our partnership with DOC and CSSD is to increase public safety while decreasing recidivism rates. The recent data shows the work we are doing is effective in protecting public safety; as well as ensuring nonviolent offenders are successfully reintegrated into society as productive members of their communities and contribute to Connecticut's economy.



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We have faith in the democratic process to develop the best state budget possible under these difficult of circumstances. As this challenging initiative is undertaken, we only ask that you take into account the overall cost of decreased funding to community-based, reentry and diversion services. Without these programs we may very well see an increase in crime rates and begin the cycle of incarceration rather than rehabilitation which is proven to be more costly for taxpayers and not effective in reducing crime.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these critically important issues. As always, please do not hesitate to contact me at any time, with questions, or for additional information:

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