TESTIMONY OF THE CONNECTICUT JUVENILE JUSTICE ALLIANCE
FOR THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
H.B. 7027 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2019, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR
JUDICIAL BRANCH
FEBRUARY 22, 2017

Good afternoon Senator Formica, Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Abby Anderson; I am the executive director of the Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance. The Alliance is a statewide public policy and advocacy organization dedicated to stopping the criminalization of Connecticut's children. We believe in prevention to keep children from entering the system, and best practice and policy to help kids who do enter the system to be successful.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak about the governor's proposed budget adjustments for the Judicial Branch. While this budget does not include new cuts, it annualizes last year's deep cuts and does not include the funding needed to implement the Governor's proposed call to include 18-year-olds in the juvenile justice system in the second year of this biennium.

We are pleased to see that this proposed budget does not appear to include new reductions to the Judicial Branch's ability to serve the juvenile justice population. However, this proposal does annualize the significant cuts made last year, through the formal budget process and "holdbacks" in July. The extent of those cuts meant the loss of programs, services and initiatives which had allowed Connecticut to experience important juvenile justice system success and become nationally recognized for its innovations and outcomes. We would like to see the decision to annualize those cuts reversed and at least some of those funds returned. *(Please see an accounting of those cuts and their impact, provided by the Judicial Branch to the juvenile justice stakeholder community last year)*

The system will not be able to maintain those nationally lauded gains, that have reduced the size (and cost of the system) and recidivism rates – increasing public safety - if these cuts become permanent. As diversion programs go away, more youth will again be referred to court. Fewer programs and services mean youth will be more apt to escalate to pre-trial detention, and as detention is a predictor of delinquency commitments and confinement at CJTS, we wouldn't be surprised if those numbers rise as well. The state believes and lives the philosophy of making court and confinement a last resort. But as programs go away, court and confinement become the only resort.

The breadth and depth of services available is especially pertinent as the Governor is relying on Connecticut's juvenile justice system successes to propose raising the age to 19 during the second year of this biennium. This is something the Alliance fully supports philosophically. However, we find it of significant concern that this proposed move does not appear to come with any funding support and on the heels of significant cuts to existing programs.

As I'm sure you are well aware, Connecticut's experience raising the age in 2010 and 2012 came with a great deal of preparation, planning and investment of resources. The call to raise the age again signifies a belief that the more service-oriented mindset of the juvenile justice system, holding youth accountable in ways that are rehabilitative, is more effective for public safety and young people. In order to provide that higher level of service, funding must be appropriated to follow those young people from the adult to the juvenile justice system. As the state found with the first iteration of Raise the Age, the investment in more probation staff, programs and services, will pay off over time as recidivism levels drop and the long term costs to our criminal justice system fall.

The tenets of the juvenile justice system include accountability, rehabilitation and a belief that involvement with the justice system should not brand or hold back an individual for life. That a person should be held accountable and leave the system able to get a job, go to school and participate fully in community. Our criminal justice system does not do that well, leaving offenders with life-long black marks and significantly impeding their ability to support themselves and their families. It is also well documented that, like in states across the nation, Connecticut's justice systems are plagued by the long-standing effects of institutional bias and structural racial disparities. People of color are much more likely to be swept up in its grasp that their white peers.

The leadership of Connecticut's legislature and Governor around juvenile and criminal justice reform is known and admired across the country. The innovations, ideas and investments have led to true reform and improvement. There is still work to be done, and just because those improvements have been made doesn't mean they can't erode from lack of funding and attention. The great ideas and statutes around juvenile justice continue to be raised and passed by this body. The money needs to follow those ideas so that our words and promises to the communities are not empty.

The juvenile justice system took significant cuts last year. Effectively serving the current cadre of youth eligible for that system is a struggle for state and private providers. To add the population of 18 year olds to that system in 2018, the state MUST ensure that the dollars to provide services to those 18 year olds are included in this budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony. We are happy to answer any questions you may have.

Alliance member organizations:
AFCAMP, Alliance for Children's Mental Health, Center for Children's Advocacy, Center for Effective Practice / CHDI, Connecticut Legal Services, Connecticut Voices for Children, Connecticut Youth Services Association, Community Partners in Action, FAVOR, LifeBridge, NAMI Connecticut, Office of the Chief Public Defender, Office of the Child Advocate, RYASAP, The Village for Families and Children

(Fact sheet provided by Judicial last year to explain cuts to the field)

FY 17 Judicial Branch CSSD
Juvenile Services Reductions Summary

1. **Programs that remain, but received across-the-board cuts of 6.9%. This reduction will result in reduced capacity for most programs, but core funding for in-home family therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, substance use treatment, mentoring, trauma-focused interventions, court evaluations, detention infrastructure, DMC reduction, and community safety remains:**

- Intermediate Residential Programs (Girls' and Boys') – *no reduction to 14-bed capacity*
- TRAC Respite Program for Boys – *no reduction to 8-bed capacity*
- MultiSystemic Therapy (MST) – *reduced capacity (by 2 therapists or 10 slots)*
- Multidimensional Family Therapy (MDFT) Waterford – *remains*
- MDFT (MOA with DCF) – *reduced planned enhancements to QA*
- Mentoring – *reduction of 5 slots from 125*
- Juvenile Sex Offender Services – *remains*
- Court-Based Assessments – *no reduction*
- Competency Evaluations – *no reduction*
- Quality Assurance of Court Evaluations (MOA with UCHC) - *remains*
- Home Care (2-12 week psychiatric bridging service offered at the FQHCs through MOA with UCHC) - *remains*
- Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) – *data collection, research and training remain funded; children continue to have access to services through insurance.*
- TARGET *(*trauma-focused psychoeducational programming provided at detention centers, residential programs and CYFSCs) - *remains*
- Flex Funds – *will limit customization and capacity to meet basic needs*
- ACRA (MOA with DCF) – *impact still unknown on outpatient substance use treatment program. CSSD was funding New Britain/Meriden team and a therapist on Hartford team. DCF assessing impact on statewide services to determine how best to minimize impact on overall system capacity.*
- Quality Assurance of CYFSC, MST, MDFT – *remains*
- Detention Recreation Programming – *remains*
- Detention Summer Enrichment Programming – *remains*
- Detention Health Care Services and Quality Assurance -*remains*
- Ombudsman for Detention and Residential Services – *remains*
- Electronic Monitoring – *remains*
- Infrastructure Support for LISTs – *remains*
- Youth Violence Prevention Initiatives – *remain*

- Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG CT) (multiagency MOA) – *remains*
- DMC Initiatives (Police-Youth Training (coordinated by CCA) and Technical Assistance (going out to bid) - *remain*

2. Programs Reduced, but remain with significantly less capacity

- Child, Youth and Family Support Centers (CYFSCs) - *$4m reduction in anticipation of the statutory change that will go into effect on 8/15/17 eliminating truancy and defiance of school rules as status offenses. Approximately 1/3 of staff and program resources were cut, including Educational Advocates, Vocational Case Coordinators, Case Coordinators, Clinicians and Leads. This will result in reduced slot capacity, significant downsizing of educational advocacy, elimination of job readiness, and probation picking up a portion of the FWSN cases.*

3. Programs Eliminated

- Washington Street Detention Center (12 bed girls' secure detention program)
  Under-utilized program
- SOAR – (6-bed boys' staff secure Alternative Detention Program)
  Under-utilized program
- MDFT programs in Rockville and Waterford
  Under-utilized program
- Educational Support Services (legal advocacy around educational issues)
  Educational and legal advocacy can be accessed through other organizations and funding streams.
- Family Engagement (contract with AFCAMP that helped secure family visits for detainees)
  Under-utilized small pilot program. CSSD will consider other means to support family engagement efforts in the future.
- Juvenile Community Service
  Small programs in Hartford and Waterbury. Probation will take on coordination of community service for clients, as it does in other locations.
- New Choices (MOA with DCF)
  11 bed boys' substance abuse intervention program in Hamden)
  CSSD funded about half of the program cost
- Work and Learn (MOA with DCF)
  75 slots across 5 locations delivering vocational support services
- Intensive, In-home Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Services (IICAPS)
  Over the last few years more and more insurance carriers are covering IICAPS. CSSD will work with providers and Office of HealthCare Advocate to encourage all insurance carriers to cover service.