Testimony before the Appropriations Committee  
On Governor’s proposed Biennial Budget FY2020-21

H.B. 7148 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH, 2021, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR

February 28, 2019  
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Hartford, CT

Good evening Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Antonella DellaRipa and I am a registered voter in Hartford CT. I am here today in my role as a dental hygienist who works for the School Based Health Centers at M.D Fox and Hartford Public High School.

I am writing testimony on the Governor’s proposed biennial budget. I am especially concerned about yet another proposed cut of almost $200,000 to the School Based Health Clinics line item in the Department of Public Health (DPH) budget.

I care about children. Every child deserves a chance to be healthy and to reach their full potential in life. But many children have health problems that make it difficult for them to learn and succeed. We want young people in CT to be healthy and thriving. School Based Health Centers (SBHCs) are an effective, integrated and cost-effective way to help young people with their health challenges – including their mental health issues, their physical health concerns, or their oral health challenges. Supporting students with their health challenges where they spend most of their waking hours during the week – right in schools – also contributes to keeping them learning in classrooms, reducing absenteeism and improving graduation rates for youth.

The main goal of our dental program is to ensure children do not miss school because of dental pain. We work with families in our communities to ensure the
children have a dental home and provide education on oral health. Our program sees student regardless of insurance status and without state funding our ability to see uninsured children who are in the most need of care may suffer.

I urge you to protect the health and wellbeing of our youngest CT residents by supporting the essential and core services that School Based Health Centers provide. Please maintain funding for SBHCs in our state so that young people can continue to thrive and stay in school. This is critical to their future and to the future of our state.

Thank you for supporting School Based Health Centers!