March 4th, 2019

Appropriations Committee

Regarding H.B. No. 7148 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIAL ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH, 2021, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.

Thank you Senator Osten and Representative Walker,

Hello, our names are Dana Forry and Marc Donald and we are the co-facilitators of the Greater Bridgeport Local Interagency Service Team (LIST). The overarching mission of the LIST is to encourage collaborative efforts among local stakeholders for assessing the physical, social, behavioral, and educational needs of children and youth in their respective communities that leads to juvenile justice involvement, and for assisting in the development of comprehensive plans to address such needs.

We are writing today representing the over 73 juvenile justice system and community based providers that make up our Greater Bridgeport LIST in opposition to the proposed State budget. While the budget does not make additional cuts to the juvenile justice system, it falls short of ensuring that the Judicial branch has the resources necessary to support our most at-risk youth.

This year, when Governor Lamont was preparing this budget, the Judicial Branch officially requested an additional $28 million dollars in order to develop the menu of community based, residential, and secure services needed. This budget gives them not one cent more than they got last year - $17 million dollars. We hear concerns every day from police, families, providers and advocates about the state of the juvenile justice system and how it is responding to youth - and yet the budgets passed and proposed significantly undermine the Judicial Branch’s ability to do that very work.
It is easiest to only hold young people accountable. The true, harder narrative is to also hold ourselves and those of you who create and vote to pass budgets accountable for ensuring, or not ensuring the system created to address youth behavior gets what it needs to fulfill its mission.

Thank you Appropriations Committee for reading my testimony today. Please contact me at 203-989-0566 or dforry@ryasap.org or Mdonald@ryasap.org if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

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Marc Donald
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