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

Appropriations Committee
March 6, 2019

I am writing this testimony in support of H.B. 7148 that provides funding of the Neighborhood Youth Center Grant. The Boys & Girls Club of Redding-Easton is a member of the Connecticut Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs (the Alliance) and it is through the Alliance that Neighborhood Youth Center Funding is made available to our Boys & Girls Club.

The Alliance consists of fifteen organizations serving 86,000 young people in twenty-two towns and cities across thirty-two Club sites in Connecticut. Boys and Girls Clubs provide a safe haven that has programs that supplement the school day by providing afterschool educational and recreational opportunities.

Clubs in Connecticut receive funding through the Neighborhood Youth Center Grant and use that funding to implement four 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 school.

The Connecticut Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs is a strong partner in the effort to close the achievement gap for so many young people who attend our clubs. Clubs have a very real impact on a young persons life during the critical out of school time. The state of Connecticut has been a great partner in the collective effort to bring opportunities to those children who are challenged by the achievement gap.

The Alliance is a statewide entity with the ability to adapt our collective services to the needs of the state and is the optimum partner to provide these critical out of school time services. Please consider supporting Neighborhood Youth Center funding and let’s continue in this work together providing “Great Futures” for the children who need us most in Connecticut.

Our Club serves more than 600 youth each year, operating on a budget that relies on NYC Grant funding to reach a breakeven state. In 2018, due to the decline and delay
in NYC grant funding we ended the year with a deficit. With the negative impact of changing tax laws affecting charitable contributions, in 2019 we will again struggle to operate in the black. At least maintaining, if not increasing NYC Grant funding, will help our Club to maintain a couple of our important community service programs – Torch and Keystone Clubs – for our middle school and high school members.

We hope and trust that the Appropriations will continue to support funding for the NYC Grant.

Respectfully,

Joseph Dolan
Executive Director
Boys & Girls Club of Redding-Easton