



Madam Chair Representative Walker, Madam Co-Chair Senator Osten & Distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Barbara Lockhart and I have been the Director of the Youth Service Bureau in The Town of Montville for nearly 24 years, as well as the case manager for the Montville Juvenile Review Board for the past 11 years. I am both a current member of, and past executive officer of the Connecticut Youth Services Association. CYSA has learned in over 47 years of serving Connecticut's communities that investing on the front end, and then re-investing in what works, creates a solid foundation for both positive and successful outcomes for Connecticut's kids and families. Years of historical data support the efficacy of YSBs across our state.

Connecticut General Statute (10-19m) states that YSBs shall be the coordinating unit of community-based services to provide comprehensive delivery of prevention, intervention, treatment, and follow up services for children, youth, and families. With over 23 plus years of experience in the YSB field I can speak first-hand about the benefits of diversion practices, increased youth and family engagement, the importance of a caring community agency, and the reward of positive outcomes when we invest and reinvest wisely, fiscally, educationally, emotionally, and socially in our families. YSBs remain our state's strongest example of a grass roots, boots on the ground practice!

The ever growing presence of Youth Service Bureaus in the realm of juvenile justice and diversion work is yielding positive results. Recent state report card data supports this claim. YSBs practice of an "on the ground" direct service approach for youth and families who have become involved in both delinquency and non-judicial situations, makes youth service bureaus both unique and familiar as a community resource for guidance, understanding and assistance. The comfort and familiarity which children, youth,

and families share with their local YSBs is reflective of mutual respect, and has a long and positive history. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted: *Barbara A. Lockhart*, MS