

## GUN VIOLENCE MENTAL HEALTH TASK FORCE

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Chuck Cummings I'm currently serving on the CT Chapter National Association Social Workers (NASW). I'm currently a Project Manager for the City of Hartford Office Youth Service Division responsible for all crisis intervention and Juvenile Justice Initiatives. I have over 30 years of social work experience serving the Hartford community and our local school system. A provider and advocate for mental health treatment that addresses the psychological burdens on children and families imposed by their chronic exposure to urban violence.

I would like to address the conversation that has been brought up this past week regarding school social workers. The City of Hartford School System and other surrounding towns are experiencing a major short fall of school social workers, and in a time such as this, that's alarming. Example, the Hartford School System has about 26,000 students in the district that occupies 51 schools throughout the city. Due to the lack of state funding the district is only allowed to employ 69 school social workers for the whole entire city which is a travesty.

In the City of Hartford we have small young students who have witness homicides and now became desensitized to their trauma. I named these children "The Yellow Tape Kids" because they have seen so much yellow tape around homicide scenes. The only other adults able to reach these children besides their parents, is a school social worker. The adults living in our city understands that what happens in the suburbs gets all the attention and sometimes feels that their voice will never be heard but this time in our State of Connecticut, everyone is hearing their voices.

I know that I'm only one voice of many who has been seeing and treating this disease for a very long time and clearly understand that the timing for this conversation and action is now. I'm speaking for my colleagues (school social workers) who are calling for help all over this state; please we need your strong voice. If you need any additional information I could be reached at 860-752-9881. Thank you.

Chuck Cummings, MSW, CT. Chapter NASW