



February 14, 2020

Members of the Appropriations Committee

CT State Legislature

Legislative Office Building

300 Capitol Avenue

Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Honorable Members of the Committee:

Please accept my sincere appreciation for the opportunity to submit my written testimony on behalf of Project Longevity. Project Longevity is a Group Violence Intervention (GVI) strategy being implemented in Bridgeport, Hartford, and New Haven. GVI is an evidence-based violence reduction model. The GVI model was designed and developed by John Jay College of Criminal Justice's National Network for Safe Communities. This model is based on forming criminal justice consortiums, community engagement, and violence intervention. GVI is associated with reducing community level gun violence in jurisdictions throughout the country. I am the Statewide Director of Project Longevity, and I lead the initiative's strategic efforts to reduce street group and gang driven gun violence. I am testifying in opposition to Governor Lamont's proposed reduction of Project Longevity's budget, which was recently conveyed in the Governor's proposed appropriations for the fiscal year 2021. The Lamont administration is proposing a \$250,213 decrease in Project Longevity funding less than a year after the state legislator appropriated an increase.

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Budgets convey values, priorities, aspirations, and intentions. If we are concerned about ensuring that families in our state's cities are safe from extreme levels of street group driven gun violence, then as a state, we can not renege on our commitment to this critical work. There are correlations associated with Project Longevity's implementation in which there have been instances where there have been decreases in non-fatal shootings by as much as 24% and decreases in fatal shootings by as much as 80%. These statistics reflect point in time data and, in some cases, a result of a precipitous decrease in violence. However, we aspire to save lives, and our commitment continues every day, and every year that we are in operation. We oppose complacency, and we are not content with outcomes as we earnestly believe that there is a lot more that can be done to keep communities safe. We remain dedicated to this work as there are numerous families, victims of gun injury, and individuals who have been ensnared by the luster of street life who depend on our outreach and support.

The General Assembly approved a funding increase in support of Project Longevity last year to support capacity-building efforts and the strengthening of our resources. Now we are faced with funding cuts a mere five months after having access to our operating budget. I encourage the Connecticut General Assembly to oppose the Governor's proposed reductions and to ensure that the convictions and resources of the General Assembly are aligned with the concerns of our communities. Budgets convey values, priorities, aspirations, and intentions. Opposing the Governor's funding cuts is a message to communities in Hartford, Bridgeport, and New Haven that this work is valuable, and a priority that reflects our collective intentions and aspirations for safer communities.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brent Peterkin". The signature is stylized with large, overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Brent Peterkin

Statewide Director

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