

**Testimony for Appropriations Committee  
Health Subcommittee**

**Public Hearing re: HB 5005, AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM  
ENDING JUNE 30, 2021**

**Libby Antonelli  
Haddam-Killingworth High School  
February 21, 2020**

Good evening distinguished members of the committee.

My name is Libby Antonelli and I'm a Junior in high school living in Killingworth. I am here to ask for support of **HB#5005 An ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2021** which supports The Governor's Prevention Partnership through the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. I work, through the Healthy Communities-Healthy Kids Coalition, with my youth action group, Ignite. Being a part of Ignite has opened so many doors for my community and for me. I am able to be a leader in my school and through participating in the statewide Youth Advisory Board, I have also been able to participate in the regional Youth 2 Youth prevention conference housed at Bryant University every year.

An important part of my group is that it is a second chance group. This means that we will accept anyone with open arms, regardless of their past drug or alcohol misuse. Our big challenge right now is fighting the epidemic that has sadly spread to my small town, vaping. Nicotine addictions have plagued children as little as fourth graders here and our goal is to stop it from spreading to anyone even younger.

Along with vaping, we also tackle problems like opioids and underage drinking. We address these issues with events and activities such as health fairs, information campaigns, mental health support(for example therapy dogs), and by engaging with the youth of my community.

Because of this group, I am immersed in so many more diverse and vibrant groups of people. People I never would've gotten the joy to talk to otherwise. My life would be very different right now if it weren't for Ignite and I hope more and more youth are allowed to experience what I am experiencing right now. Thank you for your support regarding issues that impact the young people of Connecticut and I hope that you will choose to continue funding and supporting The Governor's Prevention Partnership so that we have the opportunity to share our work with other youth action groups to positively influence our peers around the prevention of substance misuse.