

Testimony of: Lindsey Jones
YWCA New Britain Sexual Assault Crisis Service

Appropriations Committee

**H.B. No. 5005 AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM
ENDING JUNE 30, 2021.**

Department of Public Health - Rape Crisis Intervention and Prevention Services

February 21, 2020

Good evening Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Lindsey Jones, and I am the Community Justice Advocate at the YWCA New Britain Sexual Assault Crisis Service (SACS). We serve 46 towns in Connecticut, including all of Hartford County and parts of Tolland and Plymouth. We provide free and confidential services to sexual assault survivors and their loved ones. Some of these services include our toll free 24-hour hotline, accompaniments throughout medical, court and police procedures, individual counseling, prevention education, and support groups.

In my work as a victim advocate, I provide direct services to folks in times of crisis, which is especially important in marginalized communities where access to timely trauma-informed care can be difficult to obtain. When someone contacts our hotline looking to connect with an advocate, we are able assure them that they will receive follow up within two business days. The funding we receive from The Department of Public Health helps to fund advocates to work with adult populations. The funding also provides funding for two prevention educators who visit schools across our catchment area teaching kids in grades K-12 about healthy relationships, consent, boundaries, sexual harassment and bystander intervention. Our advocates and prevention educators are able to engage our communities on topics such as how to respond to disclosures and sexual violence. In all, we served over two thousand people last year through advocacy services and prevention education.

Over the past year, I have worked with many clients who believed that they were damaged beyond repair or had contributed in some way to their assaults. Through my ability to work with them to develop coping skills, provide them with resources, and share literature about the body's response in times of danger, I have been privileged to witness survivors do the hard work of empowering themselves and healing from trauma. Support from the Department of Public Health helps make this work possible.

for every woman

Sexual assault intervention services are in more demand than ever. We have seen in an increase in numbers of reported instances, which means that people are feeling more comfortable coming forward with their stories and reaching out in their moments of crisis.

Survivors need our support and services. While there is continued need and increased cost we urge you to keep the funding for rape crisis intervention and prevention services at nothing less than level funding. We very much appreciate your continued support in the fight to end sexual violence in Connecticut.

Thank you.

Lindsey Jones

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