

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, ranking members Miner and France and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Michael Eanes; I am from Litchfield, and volunteering with Connecticut Against Gun Violence.

I am testifying in opposition to any budget cut to the Project Longevity program as included in the Office of Policy and Management budget.

Now retired I spent my entire career in education as head of school in an independent school in Washington, CT and executive director of an early childhood association in New York City. If I have learned anything over the four decades of work with children, it is that education works in enhancing prevention. Fully funding Project Longevity is an act based on education and prevention. This bill will deliver programs in our urban communities particularly focused on the prevention of gun violence.

In addition to the documented economic benefits of reducing gun violence in these communities, we show young people how to advance themselves and break out of the gun culture and save lives. Existing programs in Connecticut that need reliable funding include Compass Youth Collaborative, Hartford Communities that Care and CT Violence Intervention Program in New Haven, and StreetSafe in Bridgeport.

Quite coincidentally I was delivering a chapel talk to a group of middle school students when I was interrupted with the news of Sandy Hook, which I had to relate to those children. Never before was preventative education more relevant to me than when I had to watch those children absorb that news.

I support more funding for gun violence prevention programs and urge you to fully fund the Office of Policy and Management budget for Project Longevity.

Sincerely,

Michael Eanes

Litchfield, CT