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February 22, 2021

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

My name is Ed Edelson, I am from Southbury. I am the former First Selectman of Southbury, CT.

I am testifying in opposition to the \$50K cut to Project Longevity as included in the Governor's proposed budget. I ask you to fully fund the program as it was passed in the FY 2020-2021 biennium budget.

As First Selectman, I became more involved in following gun violence legislation after the Sandy Hook tragedy. I have heard all of the objections to common sense solutions that have been proposed to block legislation. Yet the evidence is clear that common-sense, evidence based solutions reduce gun violence that saves lives and money. Project Longevity is a great example of common-sense, evidence based approach to reducing gun violence, something that we should all want.

While fully funding Project Longevity is important, I believe the State also needs to invest more in preventing community gun violence that disproportionately impacts Black and brown communities in Connecticut. That is why I'm also asking you to support a state-level grant-making authority with dedicated funding along the lines proposed by CT Against Gun Violence. It would deliver reliable funding to other types of community-based gun violence prevention programs like those operated by the Compass Youth Collaborative and Hartford Communities that Care in Hartford, the CT Violence Intervention Program in New Haven and StreetSafe in Bridgeport, to name just a few.

According to the Giffords Law Center, gun violence is estimated to directly cost Connecticut taxpayers at least \$90 million annually. Investing more in community-based violence prevention programs would not only save lives and reduce the trauma inflicted on these communities, it would save money for taxpayers.

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. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

