

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

My name is Emily Kaliney, I am from Farmington, CT. I am providing this written testimony as a member of Connecticut Against Gun Violence.

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.

I don't talk about this much, but when I was a teacher in Chicago, one of my students went through an unbelievable tragedy. His little brother got his hands on an unsecured handgun and shot and killed his older brother. It was so horrible. The family was devastated. Soon after they packed up and moved down south to be closer to family. I never saw Homer (my student) again but I think of him frequently. He used to tell me he was going to be the P-R-E-S-I-D-E-N-T (he spelled it out, because why not?) but after that horrible day, his smile and spark were just gone. If I can do anything to help families like Homer's, then I have to try! Not long after that experience, I moved to CT. While living here, I watched the tragedy of Newtown unfold. Gun Violence is running rampant in our country and we must take every possible step to end it.

Programs like Project Longevity have been demonstrated to reduce group-involved gun violence around the country, and here in Connecticut. A 2015 [study](#) conducted by Yale concluded that in New Haven, Project Longevity was associated with a reduction of five group-member involved shootings and homicides each month. If we want to achieve racial justice, we must make people safe in the communities where they live. To do so requires funding programs like Project Longevity that have proven track records of reducing gun violence.

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,

Emily Kaliney

Farmington, CT