

February 22, 2021

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

My name is Amy Ford Keohane, I am from Riverside, CT. I am a longtime advocate for safe and sensible gun laws and an Executive Board 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. This is urgent because:

- In 2020 gun homicides increased 50% in Connecticut compared to 2019. We must invest more in reducing community gun violence using proven programs like Project Longevity.
- 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.
- The Giffords Law Center estimates the directly measurable costs of gun violence to be more than \$400 million annually. In total, including the cost of pain and suffering, it's estimated that the annual cost of gun violence in Connecticut is a staggering \$1.2 billion. That's 5% of the governor's [proposed](#) annual budget, just on the cost of gun violence!
- The Group Violence Intervention strategy on which Project Longevity is modeled has been studied for years and has been [proven effective](#) based on more than 60 peer-reviewed studies. It's an evidence-based strategy that is saving lives.

And while fully funding Project Longevity is critical, 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.

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,

Amy Ford Keohane

Riverside, CT