

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

My name is William Love Jr, I am from Danbury. I am the leader of the Danbury Area Justice Network, an advocacy group for marginalized citizens.

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 a Transgender person of color, I represent groups that are disproportionately affected by gun violence across the state and our country. Gun violence is one of the few epidemics that have yet to be fully addressed by our government, with one being the choke hold that the NRA has on our legislators. Connecticut has always been the state to set the bar for gun violence prevention and it only makes sense that we continue to do so. We should not only fully fund Project Longevity as originally proposed, we should also be allocating funds to additional organizations as well. This will help to increase awareness of gun violence to all our communities and not just the ones targeted.

This will not only show that we are standing on the right side of the topic, it will also show that we are making strides towards a more racially equitable state. We need to do better by our most marginalized communities and cutting funding for gun violence prevention is not the direction we should be going in.

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.

Respectfully,  
William Love Jr  
Danbury