

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

My name is Patricia Pia. I am from Mystic. I am a citizen that is concerned about the senseless gun deaths of young black men who live in Connecticut cities.

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.

What can we do to prevent 17 year old black boys from being killed in the neighborhood where they live? Why do some many people of color have to live in cities that are like war zones where shootings can happen to anyone? We have to do something to stop these appalling events from happening.

Project Longevity has a proven track record for deterring gun violence in Connecticut cities. Their Group Violence Intervention strategy has been shown to reduce gun homicides by 35 to 60 percent. This group has the expertise and staffing to solve this problem. They must get the necessary funding to do this important work. It is the only way to break the cycle of violence and allow all people to live in a community in peace.

I urge you to fully fund the OPM budget for Project Longevity.

In addition, I support more funding for gun violence prevention programs. Please support a state-level grant-making authority with dedicated funding along the lines proposed by CT Against Gun Violence.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Patrica Pia  
Mystic, CT