

Saturday, February 20, 2021

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

My name is Irene Skrybailo, I live in New Milford, 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 2020-2021 budget.

The State needs to invest more in preventing community gun violence that disproportionately impacts Black and brown communities in Connecticut. I'm reaching out to ask you support a state-level grant-making authority with dedicated funding along the lines proposed by CT Against Gun Violence.

I know some of you are thinking... this does not speak to my constituents, I don't represent a large city, this is not important to my base. I am here to tell you it does matter, it is important. We need community based gun violence prevention programs, they reach so many people in Connecticut.

“No man is an island entirely of itself. Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind.” John Donne

If the moral imperative doesn't work for you, think of it in terms of fiscal terms. Investing in our local communities results in saved lives, promotes citizen involvement.. it makes economic sense. 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.

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. Do it for Connecticut. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Irene Skrybailo, New Milford CT