
19th February 2021

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

My name is Garrett Sullivan, I am from East Haven. I am affiliated with CT 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.

In 2020, gun homicides increased 50% in Connecticut compared to 2019. Our communities need to be safer, and we can do better. The proposed legislation is important to me because it is intended to reduce this rising rate of violence. We must invest more in reducing community gun violence using proven programs like Project Longevity.

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 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,

Garrett Sullivan

East Haven, CT