

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, ranking and esteemed members of the Appropriations Committee, My name is Terra Volpe. I am the Director for Community Outreach with CT Against Gun Violence. I am writing today to express my support for fully funding Project Longevity. Project Longevity is an important gun violence prevention program in our state and it surely deserves the funding it needs to function at its optimal capacity.

I have spent a considerable amount of time over the last two years connecting with various other kinds of community level gun violence prevention organizations across Connecticut doing good work. I have spoken to people who are working with younger youth to provide them with services and support so they maintain a productive path, steering them away from potential gun crime. I have knocked doors in high gun crime neighborhoods with organization leaders letting people know that there is support and an expectation that shootings need to stop. And most notably, I have met people who risk their lives going into real time conflicts to do de-escalation work so initial shootings do not occur and so retaliatory events are quelled. I personally know people who have taken the guns out of other people's hands who are on their way to perpetrate a shooting.

When CAGV would ask these amazing organizations what we, as a gun violence prevention legislative advocacy organization, could do to support them, nine times out of ten the response was, "we do not have enough money or resources to do this work at our full capacity." They would tell us that many of their workers were either underpaid or working as volunteers. They would say that often times they were using their own money to keep things up and running. This isn't right. These organizations need and deserve state funding too. It is my hope that in the near future, Connecticut remembers these organizations when allocating funding for gun violence prevention. In order to end this epidemic, we need to start thinking more

broadly about all of the tools it will take to get this done and really support those doing the on the ground work of protecting communities.

Thank You,

Terra Volpe

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