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H.B. 6439 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR  
THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH, 2023, AND MAKING  
APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.

Appropriations Committee  
March 1, 2021

I am writing this testimony in support of H.B. 6439 that provides funding of the Neighborhood Youth Center Grant. The Boys & Girls Club of Stamford is a member of the Connecticut Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs (the Alliance) and it is through the Alliance that Neighborhood Youth Center Funding is made available to our Boys & Girls Club.

The Alliance consists of Sixteen organizations serving 85,000 young people in twenty-two towns and cities across thirty-two Club sites in Connecticut. Boys and Girls Clubs provide a safe haven that has programs that supplement the school day by providing afterschool educational and recreational opportunities.

During the COVID 19 global pandemic, the Boys & Girls Club of Stamford helped close many gaps for the community we serve. The Club helped by:

- 1- Closing the opportunity gap by helping parents of our young members go back to work. By creating a safe place for members to come to while their parents returned to work.
- 2- Closing the digital divide by enabling many of our young members to have the technology and connectivity to stay connected with our program directors. Our program directors provided remote learning, virtual engagement and digital programming.
- 3- Closing the academic gap by providing remote and onsite homework help, mentoring, coaching and learning opportunities in reading, math and sciences.
- 4- Closing the insecurity, mental wellness and social disengagement gap, by providing a safe place for our teens to feel socially connecting, build trusting and secure relationship and participate in athletic programs.

Clubs in Connecticut receive funding through the Neighborhood Youth Center Grant and use that funding to implement four programs designed to improve academic

success, develop healthy lifestyles and build good character and citizenship in our members. These programs and others like them enable our clubs to extend and reinforce what is being taught in school.

The Connecticut Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs is a strong partner in the effort to close the achievement gap for so many young people who attend our clubs. Clubs have a very real impact on a young persons life during the critical out of school time. The state of Connecticut has been a great partner in the collective effort to bring opportunities to those children who are challenged by the achievement gap.

We strive to have all our high schoolers graduate from high school and pursue post high school education. We do so by:

- 1- Providing college virtual tours
- 2- SAT prep
- 3- Helping our high schoolers seek financial aid and scholarships

The Alliance is a statewide entity with the ability to adapt our collective services to the needs of the state and is the optimum partner to provide these critical out of school time services. Please consider supporting Neighborhood Youth Center funding and lets continue in this work together providing "Great Futures" for the children who need us most in Connecticut.