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Boys & Girls Club of Greenwich

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 Greenwich 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 pandemic, Boys & Girls Club of Greenwich supported our members, families, and community by:

- Providing virtual learning model when schools closed to maintain staff-member connections, combat academic learning loss, and provide educational support and school supplies.
- Conducting hundreds of family wellness checks, offering access to groceries, technology, tutoring, school supplies, and mental health assistance to members and families in need.
- Opening three camps for over 350 kids for ten weeks beginning June 29 so that parents could return to work and have a safe, supportive place for their children to spend their summer.
- Serving over 4,000 meals with our community partners Filling in the Blanks, Neighbor to Neighbor, and the Transportation Association of Greenwich.
- Providing a new remote learning center along with tutoring and homework help for high school and elementary students.
- Offering afterschool and evening programs including athletics, teen engagement, character-building groups, academic support, and mentoring classes.

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 person's 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 support and augment high school guidance around college admissions and preparation through:

- Academic support and family outreach to ensure teens stay on track to graduate and matriculate to college.
- Free SAT prep courses in the fall and spring.
- College Scholarships to bridge the financial aid gap.
- Career exploration through panels and mentorship.

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 let us continue in this work together, providing "Great Futures" for the children who need us most in Connecticut.