

PA13-302

HB6703

House	9819-9828	10
Judiciary	4273-4289, 4411-4413, 4762-4765	24
Senate	5435, 5438-5439	3
		37

H – 1178

**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HOUSE**

**PROCEEDINGS
2013**

**VOL.56
PART 29
9742 – 10110**

If all members have voted, the machine will be locked and the Clerk will take a tally.

THE CLERK:

146, 0, 4.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

The Clerk will please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

Madam Speaker, in concurrence with the Senate, Substitute Senate Bill 6 -- 761 as amended by Senate "A".

Total Number Voting	146
Necessary for Passage	74
Those voting Yea	146
Those voting Nay	0
Absent and not voting	4

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

The bill passes in concurrence with the Senate.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar 524?

THE CLERK:

Yes, Madam Speaker, on page 44, Calendar Number 524, favorable report of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations, House Bill 6703, AN ACT CONCERNING YOUTH VIOLENCE AND GANG ACTIVITY.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Ritter.

REP. RITTER (1ST):

Thank you, Madam Speaker Ritter.

I move for acceptance of the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

The question before the Chamber is acceptance of the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

Representative Ritter, you have the floor.

REP. RITTER (1ST):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And this bill comes to us, as you noted out of Judiciary and Appropriations and it passed both committees unanimously. Basically it does two things; one, it clarifies that recruiting a member of a criminal gang in some cases can be a Class A Misdemeanor. And more importantly, what it really talks about in Section 2 is dealing with the Court Support Services Division and trying to get probation officers to begin to work with our youth earlier to help reduce recidivism and also keep people from getting in the juvenile system in the first place.

This had testimony from the New Haven Youth Bureau, the Chief of Police of the city of Hartford James Rovella, and again has passed both committees unanimously. It's a very good bill. Again, hopefully it always -- like everything else, is subject to the amount of appropriations the program gets, but it contemplates, again, probation officers, and others working with community-based service groups, religious organizations, athletic leagues to work with our young people, identify situations and issues that need to be resolved earlier, preventiveness (sic) -- preventive measures, all things that we really care about and I think help prioritize what we believe is really important.

So I want to thank all the members who have worked hard on this bill. It's a very diverse and bipartisan group.

And I urge passage, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Will you remark further on this bill?

Representative Cafero, you have the floor.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you -- thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I want to concur with everything that Representative Ritter said, except for one, and that's when he used the word more importantly, as if Section 2 is more important than Section 1.

I think they're equally as important. And let me explain what I mean. It has been my privilege actually for the last 21 years to work with underprivileged, at-risk youth in the city of Norwalk. And as my colleagues from Norwalk -- certainly Representative Morris, Representative Perone, Representative Wood, Representative Lavielle will attest to.

We have our share of urban problems in the city of Norwalk as all municipalities' experience, and gang violence certainly is among them. And one of the things that I have unfortunately seen firsthand, is how very young, vulnerable children -- usually males -- usually minority males can be lured and recruited into gang activity and criminal activity.

I see it happening so often. Sometimes because of a lack of other opportunities made available to them. Very wise elders of criminal gangs will prey on the younger members or a neighborhood or a community and lure them and recruit them into gang activity.

And what this bill does is recognize that fact and penalize that fact and God willing will deter that fact. And that, Madam Speaker, I believe is a very important part of this bill, so I stand in strong support.

Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Will you remark further?

Representative Rebimbas.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I also rise in support of the bill that's before us. It certainly has passed unanimously and rightfully. I also want to thank everyone who's in support of the bill and the leadership of Representative Cafero on this side of the aisle and the many others that have had a hand in drafting of this bill.

With that said, I did also want to highlight that essentially what it does is it gets all of the interested parties as well talking to one another. Those judicial system, probation officers, officers, everyone that comes into contact with these unfortunate gang members to talk to them and to talk

collaboratively to determine how best then to deter these children from being recruited for this type of activity that we know unfortunately leads to many other devastating situations.

I think that's very important, but equally as important in addition to the pilot program, specifically we have a deadline of February 1st, 2014 by which the Chief Core Administrator will present a report on a -- on the love -- work that they would have had done under this bill. And I think that's important because at -- what that then allows us to do is evaluate the pilot and be able to identify the weaknesses and the strengths.

And hopefully, Madam Speaker, we would be able to then enhance the strengths and if there's any weaknesses we can address it. So then the true goal of this bill could be implemented and could be successfully done in the state of Connecticut. So I do rise in support of the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Will you remark further?

Representative McGee, you have the floor, sir.

REP. MCGEE (5TH):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I too rise in support of this bill as a Representative from the Hartford Delegation. I -- I know firsthand the experience of many of our young people going through the streets and needing the support system that we're talking about today.

So I stand in agreement with -- with my colleagues across the aisle, on this side, as well as those in the court system to really help remedy some of the -- the -- the needs of our -- our young people in the city.

So I also encourage our colleagues to support it as well.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Will you remark further? Will you remark further?

Representative Ritter.

REP. RITTER (1ST):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I just want to clarify my earlier remarks and to say that Section 2 is as important, certainly not more important.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Will you remark further?

Representative Ayala, you have the floor, ma'am.

REP. AYALA (128TH):

Yeah, good afternoon, Madam Speaker.

I also have to join my colleagues throughout the Assembly and -- and support this great bill. I'm very excited that we have the -- the opportunity to promote positive relationships in trying to stop gang violence. I believe that project longevity, which is also going on in Bridgeport, I believe New Haven will actually benefit quite a bit from this bill. They complement each other very well and it's a positive step towards giving our youth better guidance towards accomplishing -- becoming more successful adults.

And I -- I thank the committee that worked very hard and all the committees here in the Assembly that are supporting this bill.

Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Will you remark further?

Representative Vargas.

REP. VARGAS (6TH):

Yes, I -- thank you, Madam Speaker.

I also rise to join in with my colleagues and thank all of the individuals both in the Judiciary,

Appropriations, and all the other committees that worked with this bill and encourage my colleagues to support this bill.

Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Will you remark further? Will you remark on this bill?

If not, will staff and guests please come to the Well of the House? Will members take their seats and the machine will be open?

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll.

The House of Representatives is voting by roll. Will members please return to the Chamber immediately?

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Have all the members voted? Have all the members voted?

Will the members please check the board to determine if their vote has been properly cast?

If all the members have voted, the machine will be locked and the Clerk will take a tally.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

The Clerk will please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

hac/gbr
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

331
June 4, 2013

House Bill 6703	
Total Number Voting	146
Necessary for Passage	74
Those voting Yea	146
Those voting Nay	0
Absent and not voting	4

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

The bill passes.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Will the Clerk please call Calendar 595?

THE CLERK:

Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Calendar Number 595, on page 24, favorable report of Joint Standing Committee on General Law, Senate Bill 327, AN ACT CONCERNING PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING LICENSES.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Kiner.

REP. KINER (59th):

Good evening, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Good evening, sir.

REP. KINER (59th):

**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SENATE**

**PROCEEDINGS
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**VETO
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And Mr. President, Calendar page 16, Calendar 704, House Bill 6692, I move to place this item on our Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. I think that's already been marked.

SENATOR LOONEY:

It has been marked? Thank you.

And then we have another item, Mr. President, Calendar page 16, would ask for suspension for purposes of taking up Calendar 705, House Bill Number 6703 for purposes of moving it to the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Without objection, so ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you.

Therefore, Mr. President, I move to Calendar page 16, Calendar 705, House Bill 6703 to the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Without objection, so ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

We might stand at ease for a moment to verify certain items before calling for a vote on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

The Senate will stand at ease.

(Chamber at ease.)

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, if the clerk would now call -- would now list the items on the Consent Calendar so that we might proceed to a vote on the Consent Calendar before taking up additional items.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

Page 2 -- sorry -- House Bill 6672, and then on page 2, Calendar 423, House Bill 5907.

On page 4, Calendar 464, House Bill 5601; Calendar 465, House Bill 6630.

On page 5: 485, House Bill 6602; Calendar 503, House Bill 6635.

On page 6: Calendar 19, House Bill 5903; Calendar 522, House Bill 5598.

On page 7: Calendar 570, House Bill 6486; Calendar 571, House Bill 6492.

On page 8: Calendar 601, House Bill 6490; Calendar 606, House Bill 6674.

On page 10, Calendar 644, House Bill 6363.

On page 12, Calendar 668, House Bill 6362; and Calendar 672, House Bill 548.

On page 15: Calendar 695, House Bill 5289; Calendar 696, House Bill 6658.

On page 16: Calendar 704, House Bill 6692; 705, House Bill 6703.

On page 17: Calendar 706, House Bill 6651.

And on page 21: Calendar 431, Senate Resolution Number 15.

HB 5480

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, please announce the pendency of a roll call vote, the machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate.
Senators please return to the chamber. Immediate roll call on Consent Calendar Number 2 has been ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all members have voted? If all members have voted, please check the board to make sure your vote is accurately recorded.

If all members have recorded, the machine will be closed and the clerk will announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

The second Consent Calendar

Total Number Voting	35
Those voting Yea	35
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

Consent Calendar Number 2 passes.

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I just wanted to review and have we adopted Senate Agendas 3 and 4?

THE CHAIR:

**JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
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2013

ANTHONY SALVATORE: Right. In other words, if they were going to sell them to an FFL, it appears that we have to be involved.

REP. CARPINO: And I appreciate this, and maybe we can talk more offline about this, knowing that they already turned them over to the police station, so we already have the opportunity for individuals to come in.

ANTHONY SALVATORE: And we have two choices, Representative, today. They, unlike years ago. They either turn them in to state or local police, or they have to sell the weapons to a Federal Firearms Licensed dealer.

REP. CARPINO: And I'm well aware of that, but my question here, knowing that you want to strike this provision, was wondering if you had any suggestions knowing that we do need to get these out of the hands of folks who don't need them. And it was my understanding that your opinion was to get rid of this provision, and I was looking to see if you had any alternatives. Thank you.

A VOICE: Okay.

SENATOR COLEMAN: Are there other questions? Seeing none, thank you, gentlemen.

ANTHONY SALVATORE: Thank you, Senator.

MATTHEW REED: Thank you.

SENATOR COLEMAN: Chief James Rovella and Richard Holton.

JAMES ROVELLA: Good morning, everyone, and thank you very, very much for allowing me to speak today. And I've also supplied written testimony in regards to 6703, our youth

violence and gang activity, and 1163, preventing urban youth delinquency and violence. Seated next to me is Sergeant Richard Holton of the Hartford Police Union.

And that's a unique approach, ladies and gentlemen, because now you're seeing that not only the rank and file but the management are on the same page when it comes to our youth and how we're beginning to prevent crime rather than to just respond to crime. And that is very important to us not to be, focus everything on reactivity but focus it on the prevention.

And I've submitted written testimony both, to both proposed bills. And I just want to briefly go over some of the high points for those bills, and I will be available for questions.

One of our unique approaches to addressing and preventing crime has been our PROSPER program, Preventing Recidivism through Organized Supervision, Partnerships, and Enhanced Relationships, where I actually devote a community service officer, and there's 17 community service officers in my police department that address all the neighborhoods.

There's three more that address the faith-based initiatives and their supervisors. We actually team up with a probation officer. And, ladies and gentlemen, it's a database-driven initiative. With 5,000 probationers in my city, we know who are the most violent, and we're trying to keep them out of trouble. And in a recent CSSD newsletter, you can see that we're 17 percent higher in preventing recidivism than in the normal course.

My PAL initiative, arguably my most endangered kids in the city -- every e-mail I have is in regards to a single parent trying to make their way through or trying to work and want that positive reinforcement and interaction with police officers.

My faith-based initiative where I've organized a virtual army of individuals that are coming outside the walls of their churches to interact with my urban youth -- it's being developed, and it's probably one of our most aggressive initiatives.

Our aggravated assault numbers -- 30 percent of our aggravated assault numbers are domestic related. We're shoveling sand against the tide, because we're growing new people that engage in aggravated assaults, including domestic violence. Soon my domestic violence unit, which is in a major crime unit, will identify those children and funnel those children off to a social program that will help them with anger management and try to break that cycle of domestic violence.

Previously, I've submitted written testimony on my DMC program. This is actually reduction in the school-to-jail pipeline that is occurring in our major cities where our youth are often identified, arrested in the juvenile status. And there's some staggering numbers out there, folks, which have relationships and correlations to juvenile arrests and adult arrests and the pipeline to jail.

These all correspond with the United State Attorney's new initiative for project longevity. They dovetail in very nicely with those initiatives, and they're unique to our major cities. And I work very closely with the New Haven police chief and the Bridgeport chief

in collaborating with several different efforts. So thank you very much, and I'm available for questions.

SENATOR COLEMAN: Lieutenant, do you have anything to add?

RICHARD HOLTON: Not at this time.

SENATOR COLEMAN: Okay. Are there questions for either Chief Rovella or Lieutenant Holton? Representative Rebimbas.

REP. REBIMBAS: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and actually not so much a question as much as a compliment. I just wanted to say thank you for proposing these real preventative measures and also reaching out to community organizations in these efforts. I think that speaks volumes. Thank you.

JAMES ROVELLA: Thank you very much.

SENATOR COLEMAN: Senator McLachlan.

SENATOR MCLACHLAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Chief, thank you, Sergeant, for being with us today. Could you clarify a little further, how does faith-based ministries work with the Hartford Police Department in this regard?

JAMES ROVELLA: We're actually four meetings in and have attracted more than 70 of the faith-based groups around our city. The idea here is not exactly where your ministry is located. It's actually where your parishioners live, and they live not only in the city, they live outside in the capital region.

And now how do you impact our violence? Well, our violence is driven by retaliation or retribution afterwards. And we're asking those

people, if you know the family, if you know the victim, to stop that, stop the violence, interact somehow. There, our gun buy-back program, they want to be hugely involved in that gun buy-back program.

They also want to introduce different aspects of being responsible for our youth. As we grew up, our neighbors were responsible for us too. And that's kind of where we're going with them. It's going to be a unique approach. I'm not exactly sure how far or how it's going to develop, but I'm very enthusiastic about it.

SENATOR COLEMAN: Senator.

SENATOR MCLACHLAN: Thank you, Chief. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR COLEMAN: Representative Smith.

REP. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm just looking at the language of the bill, and I'm trying to play this out in my mind how it would work, because it's, we make a, if this bill were to become law, it's now a Class A felony for anybody recruiting a gang member, which is fine with me, and I'm in favor of it.

I'm just wondering how it works though in practice, because I suspect, and I don't know, but I suspect if there's recruitment going on, there's, I'm not sure if it comes from the top down or whether everybody involved with a gang is recruiting, you know, the kid down the street to help join in their enterprise.

So if we're going to prosecute under this statute, what are we really looking at? Are we looking to get the top dog, so to speak, or are we looking to get anybody involved in the recruitment process?

JAMES ROVELLA: That's part of it, sir. Let me draw you just a little, a picture. Most of our youth that are engaged in gangs are youth that are out in the streets. They're looking for a place to belong, whether that's, and that's in that group.

And we're seeing several different smaller gangs, by streets or by names, and they're often recruited to sell drugs. And that's very difficult for us, because some of these drug dealers are making 5, 8,000, 10,000 dollars per week. And it attracts these youth who are either unemployable or educationally behind.

So they are very susceptible. I think we're targeting the people who recruit them that want them to sell the drugs, that want them to bear the arms, that want them to be their minions. And that's often reflected in bylaws. It's reflected in oaths. It's reflected in ceremonies. Those are the guys we really want to attack.

REP. SMITH: Which is interesting, because, you know, the fact that it even had bylaws is pretty amazing, that you have a gang with bylaws to commit crime, but why you would put that in writing I'm not sure. But I guess they do.

But if the gangs are now becoming even smaller, where they're just, you know, it's going by neighborhoods, a couple streets here, or a section of a town, do we really have the ability then to, I, let me just back up a second. I was looking at the statute, and it has a lot of these criterions that you have to meet in order to be prosecuted under the statute, you know, have a name, have an association, things of that nature.

So if any one of these are not met -- let's assume they do not have a name -- they're just a bunch of kids from Fifth Street -- would we be able to prosecute under the statute as you read it?

JAMES ROVELLA: Depending on the elements of the crime, and those elements are based on, yes, if we can prove a name, if we can prove some written, if we can prove verbal, all those come into effect. And some of the statutes are read and/or. So we'd have to take particular look at that as we go through these particular gangs.

REP. SMITH: And thanks for the answers. And it's something probably for the Committee to take a look at as well just to make sure how we want to frame the issue, whether it's, if all these issues have to be proven or whether just any combination thereof. But obviously it's a goal of ours, I'm sure yours as well, to, you know, eliminate gang violence. So anything we can do in that regard is a step forward, so thank you.

JAMES ROVELLA: Thank you, sir.

SENATOR COLEMAN: Representative Ritter.

REP. RITTER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, Chief, I want to thank you, Rich, for being here today, and, really, thank you for what you do for the city that I've lived in my entire life. And we do really appreciate it.

I want to talk to you just quickly about prevention. I know Representative McCrory has talked about this and, out of passion and speech in the floor of the House, we voted on the latest gun prevention package, and there

was (inaudible), and I was very proud to support that.

We also want to keep the prevention piece in there as well. It's not just passing laws. It's not just sending people to jail. It's also putting people in a position where we never get to that point, which I think is ultimately society's goal and much more cost-effective. I know that the Police Activity League is something you've been very interested in, Chief.

Can you just talk a little bit about what Hartford is doing around the prevention piece? I see Andrew Woods, whose done a lot of stuff in Hartford both in terms of municipal funding, federal grants, things like that to make sure that we're interacting between our police department and our youths and the City of Hartford so that we never get to the points that some of these statutes address. Through you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

JAMES ROVELLA: Yes, sir. The Police Athletic League is funded exclusively right now by the Hartford Police Department in my budget. I have one sergeant, a part-time lieutenant there, and three officers. With that, I fund a tremendous amount of compensatory time, which is staggering to my budget.

But I have to do that, because these are our youth, and these are the youth that are most endangered in my city. And they're quartered at a, somewhat of a dilapidated building at Quirk Middle School, which has some recreation facilities. But those facilities are just regulation.

What we've done is, when they come through the door, when they're bussed to us and come

through the door, they have to do 45 minutes to an hour of homework, because we realize that's probably the most important thing here, before they even go upstairs or outside. And before they leave our facility, they're also given dinner, a nutritious dinner. And we surveyed these kids and found out that cheese puffs and juice boxes were exclusively their nutrition.

So we believe that our youth are important. And what we've done is, it transgresses both our violent crime initiative and our quality of life initiative. We believe in the city that there's a very small percentage of bad, bad people that are responsible for a very large amount of our crime. So my specialized units and my patrol units all take off a particular large amount.

But what I found is that new kids are taking their places, and that's why we have to go towards prevention. That is the most important part of slicing off that violent crime initiative that some of these kids are seeing out there. So we keep attacking disproportionate minority contact. I don't need (inaudible) juvenile kids arrested.

My PAL kids, they have to come through the door, because they're the product of a single parent and out in the street. And I run summertime programs for them and afterschool programs, and I send them places that they'd never get to go. I have to do PROSPER, because I have to control the, and monitor the probation aspect of everyone in my city. And that isn't even to address the 650 sex offenders in my district.

So these are some of the initiatives that we're trying to do, cycle children away from domestic violence, because I've learned anger management

behavior is something that we have to break the cycle of.

REP. RITTER: Thank you, Senator Coleman, and, Chief, thanks for that answer. And I know we'll do our part up here. I know there are some other bills and people speaking to the agenda to see what we can squeeze in a very tight budget this year to try to help out those efforts. We appreciate it. Thank you.

JAMES ROVELLA: I appreciate your consideration, sir.

SENATOR COLEMAN: Representative Gonzalez.

REP. GONZALEZ: Thank you. And thank you, Chief, and thank you for coming --

JAMES ROVELLA: Good morning.

REP. GONZALEZ: -- for your testimony. I've got a couple of questions. Who will participate in this pilot program?

JAMES ROVELLA: In what program?

REP. GONZALEZ: In the youth violence gang activity. This is going to be a pilot program.

JAMES ROVELLA: This pilot program, we've already begun to run these programs, and I'm looking to expand these programs and enhance them on quite a few different levels, probationers, in regards to PROSPER, our children in regards to PAL, our children in regards to the children around domestic violence.

And my disproportionate minority contact, those are all kids in schools that we shouldn't be arresting, because I probably could have been arrested when I was a youth like that. We need

to funnel these kids to different places. We need their programs. We need school to administer discipline, not law enforcement officers.

REP. GONZALEZ: Yeah, but working with those kids, you know, do you have people from that community working with those kids?

JAMES ROVELLA: Oh, certainly. One of the key aspects of the PAL program is young mentors that we're going to begin early summer. And that is the connection between our children between 8 and 15 to children that are 17 and 18 years old, because that connection is much tighter than an adult actually trying to make that connection. And those mentoring programs goes toward their education, and their education is key.

REP. GONZALEZ: And right now, do your police officers, do they get involved with the Boys and Girls Club or Job Corps that we got kids that, you know, we really need, you know, you guys to get involved? Are you guys getting involved with that?

JAMES ROVELLA: We like to get involved in it, and that's one of the aspects of that school of Quirk. One (inaudible) is very important to us. It's very important to have our children learn how to swim. Our city kids need to learn how to swim. My officers have also been involved with that PROSPER program. They've noticed an increase in the probationers staying out of trouble, getting driver's license, and seeking employment and gaining employment.

REP. GONZALEZ: But right now, are you guys involved with Job Corps and Boys and Girls Club? Are you guys involved right now?

JAMES ROVELLA: Not Job Corps, no, ma'am.

REP. GONZALEZ: No.

JAMES ROVELLA: Boys and Girls Clubs we're in and out of with the community service officers.

REP. GONZALEZ: Okay. I think that I would like, I have a Job Corps in my district, and I know it's got a lot of problems, you know, with the kids down there. And I would love to see you, you know, you get involved with this program. It's very important.

JAMES ROVELLA: Yes, ma'am.

REP. GONZALEZ: Thank you.

JAMES ROVELLA: You're welcome.

SENATOR COLEMAN: Are there other Members with questions for Chief and Lieutenant? Representative Dillon.

REP. DILLON: Good afternoon. Thank you very much for the work that you're doing. But I want to jump back a little bit what you meant about the learned behavior part of your testimony. What do you mean by that?

JAMES ROVELLA: That surrounds our domestic violence initiative where we're trying to identify children around the domestic violence other than the adults involved in domestic violence. And I found that once we start scrubbing the data and looking at the numbers that there is a learned behavior here with domestic violence.

And these are the children that are learning these answer management techniques or not learning them in regards to fighting parents or fighting a boyfriend or girlfriend or a single

parent. I want to identify those children, and I can't affect their anger management, but other agencies can. All I want to do is identify them and funnel them off into some services where they can manage their issues of their own life.

REP. DILLON: Thank you, but, and I'm not, I'm just trying to figure out the explanatory part of it. We've known for a long time that a young person who's a witness to violence is more likely to be a witness again or to be a perpetrator, in fact.

And the part, the tough part sometimes is the explanatory part. And also sometimes the data is skewed because of the urban areas. There may be a zip code effect also. I am, could it be that some of them are responding to a traumatic experience?

And I don't mean to excuse individual behavior. I mean, we know that years down the road that is a very possible thing, but it could be, and I'm just thinking of families that I worked with years ago where especially a young boy who may identify the mother as the nurturing one but who sees her as weak, because a male partner is beating her up, may end up with anger towards her, because maybe he's, he has abandoned the children, that the children are also victims.

I'm just suggesting that apart from simply kind of a mimicking aspect that there also might be a lot of complicated ways that you respond to that kind of threat in a very intimate setting.

JAMES ROVELLA: Actually, that's interesting. A couple steps down the road we took domestic violence and placed it into the major crimes division and made domestic violence a high-

focal, a high-attention in my police department. Also in major crimes is the investigation of sexual assaults, serious assaults, homicides.

And that is the next step, which we are already talking about, that the witnesses around that, who are often youths and children, have that same effect later on in life. And I need to identify those children and make sure those children have the treatment they need.

REP. DILLON: Thanks. And there is a cluster of behaviors sometimes, some of which may have not been considered crimes but may be. I remember, and this was a long time ago, because the federal government was paying for it, when we were in New Haven -- I represent the west side of New Haven -- we had a major arson initiative, and we found some very surprising cross, there, a lot of the arsons in some areas were part of the domestic violence and also burning someone's building or murdering their animals in retaliation if they tried to break off the relationship.

And the initiative is really focused on arson so that that was what we were looking at. Have you seen that kind of cross-pattern, or have you looked for it?

JAMES ROVELLA: You know, what you're seeing is somewhat of the triangle that is early on in most arsonists where they bed wet, they do things to animals, and eventually they start fires. And it's a wiping of what they consider a clean slate. But we see that mostly in sociopaths. And that behavior can be identified early on in life and is a very interesting aspect.

REP. DILLON: Thank you very much.

JAMES ROVELLA: You're welcome.

SENATOR COLEMAN: Are there other questions? Let's see. Chief, I think you made, in your testimony, reference to the U.S. Attorney's initiatives. Is that the focused deterrent, deterrence initiative?

JAMES ROVELLA: The project longevity is they would find --

SENATOR COLEMAN: Project longevity.

JAMES ROVELLA: -- a project for the big cities in the state. And we realize as our big cities go so do the regions around our cities go. And he wants to expand it to the entire state.

It's actually focusing on youth that are endangered or youth that are participating in crimes and actually trying to funnel them or to redirect them to other aspects of being a productive life, their jobs, their families, their places of worship.

SENATOR COLEMAN: And with respect to Quirk Middle School, I understand that there's a renovation planned or in progress for that. Is the use of that facility restricted to the recreational facilities there?

JAMES ROVELLA: Right now, Senator, because of the condition of the building, it's restricted to just the PAL and I have the Police Academy there. It's actually been a very good representation in the neighborhood, because crime has dropped dramatically in that neighborhood.

I hope to expand it to social agencies or other recreational agencies like the YMCA, like the

Boy Scouts of America who want to come in, and that is another slicing of these kids and taking a small portion and redirecting them away from crime.

SENATOR COLEMAN: Okay. I guess the focus of my question is at Quirk Middle. The old Quirk Middle is a pretty big building. Are there plans to use all of that building or just portions of the building?

JAMES ROVELLA: Only the west side. The east side has been redeveloped as the global academy, so it is only the west side of the facility, which includes two basketball courts, an auditorium, a pool, and some very limited office space.

SENATOR COLEMAN: Okay. And I guess finally I just also wanted to add my thanks for your appearance here today, both of you. And I guess I'm not sure if congratulations is the correct word, but we do observe in the City of Hartford that your work has contributed to a very significant decline in violent crime. So I encourage you to keep up the good job, and I know that you will.

JAMES ROVELLA: Thanks, Senator. We will.

SENATOR COLEMAN: All right.

RICHARD HOLTON: Just before we break, Senator, I'd just like to say for the record that in my 17 years here as a police officer in the City of Hartford and seeing chiefs come and go in my career, Chief Rovella has done an excellent and a commendable job with this initiative and programs.

I haven't seen a reduced numbers in crimes as staggering as they have been until he took over. It's for the men and women that work

hard every day in these programs with these initiatives to make sure that the City of Hartford is sustainable and viable for the economic growth.

We know that growth is related to crime numbers and violence, and Chief Rovella has done a great job in keeping those numbers down. We haven't had a homicide in the City of Hartford for the first quarter in a long time. They were double digit numbers at times.

This year, I think there was one homicide. It was domestic related and solved quickly. I think we're at four right now, compared to other cities in the state of Connecticut would have larger numbers. I think if these programs fail at some point in time or don't get the proper support, you'll see those numbers climb. And the City of Hartford, the capital city, can't afford that.

So whatever this Committee could do or the State of Connecticut could do to help support these committees, these programs and affect the youths within the city to make them more viable and sustainable would be greatly appreciated, and it will have a direct correlation in how the city grows with the opportunities for these individuals to get meaningful jobs and meaningful wages in a trade they can bring and translate to their adult life in the future. Thank you very much.

SENATOR COLEMAN: Thank you.

JAMES ROVELLA: Thanks for your time, sir.

SENATOR COLEMAN: Mm-hmm. Marie is next.

A VOICE: (Inaudible).

CYNDI ROBERTS: Thank you.

SENATOR COLEMAN: Steve Driffin.

STEPHEN DRIFFIN: Good afternoon.

SENATOR COLEMAN: Good afternoon.

STEPHEN DRIFFIN: Good afternoon, Senator Coleman, Representative Fox, and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Steve Driffin and I am here to represent the City of New Haven and the Youth Services Department for the Raised Bill 6703. The City of New Haven has over 20,000 identified youth and over 100 youth-servicing organizations aimed at providing a myriad of support services for them.

In addition, the City has been historically known to be at the forefront of innovative thinking and initiatives to provide the best services for the youth of our city. Senator, Representatives, and members of youth services -- as a members -- as a member of the youth services specialist working for the Youth Service Bureau of New Haven, I applaud everyone's efforts in working toward solutions to improving the lives of youth. We are forever lucid that we could never have enough services for such a population with diverse needs.

New Haven youth-serving organizations are dedicated to prevention of young -- youth violence and gang activity and we are in support of House Bill 6703, and would be honored to assist in this initiative and be part of the process primarily because New Haven is virtually doing this in a vary -- varying capacities currently. However, it is

imperative that resources be made available to Bill 6703 to ensure the success of our youth overall. Without such it would pretty much be making brick without straw. In addition there are specific concerns and questions with the bill regarding some of its content and more comprehensive discussions should take place with the community agencies in New Haven on these particular areas before consensus is reached. Thank you.

SENATOR COLEMAN: Thank you.

Any questions for Mr. Driffin?

Representative Holder-Winfield.

REP. HOLDER-WINFIELD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You mentioned questions that there are with the bill, but you didn't mention what those questions are. Could you kind of expand upon that?

STEPHEN DRIFFIN: Yes. If understood, enhanced enforcement interventions alone will lack efficacy with the bill just as it stands. We are wondering, you know, we look at the resources that to support the prevention for youth, for families in general who are affected, who are involved with the youth. Those are the questions that we have, how is that really going to support and how can we embolden the families and to prevent youth violence and gang activity. We would like to see how that -- those are the questions that we have, how would that, with a lack of funds, how would we be effective in helping the family, the complete unit. Because without it, just having the enforcement interventions alone wouldn't really be suffice.

REP. HOLDER-WINFIELD: Thank you. Thank you, Mr.

Chair.

SENATOR COLEMAN: Thank you.

Are there other questions?

I see you're identified as New Haven Youth Service Bureau, is that a part of the New Haven city government or is that the Youth Service Bureau that was constructed by the Legislature?

STEPHEN DRIFFIN: Well, the Youth Service Bureau is part of actually the City and the larger area, region.

SENATOR COLEMAN: Okay.

STEPHEN DRIFFIN: There's several Youth Service Bureaus within the state.

SENATOR COLEMAN: Have you had any opportunity to review Senate Bill 1163 which is also on the agenda? And I know it does not apply to New Haven, but the concept is similar to 6703 having to do with prevention of youth violence.

STEPHEN DRIFFIN: No, I have not, 1163?

SENATOR COLEMAN: Yes.

STEPHEN DRIFFIN: No, I have not.

SENATOR COLEMAN: Okay. Would you take a look at that for me and sometime subsequent to this public hearing, can you share some thoughts on that?

STEPHEN DRIFFIN: Absolutely.

SENATOR COLEMAN: Okay. Thank you for your testimony.

**JOINT
STANDING
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HEARINGS**

**JUDICIARY
PART 14
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2013



City of New Haven
Community Services Administration
Youth Services Bureau



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LINE 4

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TO: Senator Coleman, Representative Fox and Members of the Judiciary Committee

From: Stephen Driffin, Youth Services Specialist

RE: Raised Bill No. 6703

Date: March 15, 2013

The City of New Haven has over 20,000 identified youth and over 100 youth serving programs aimed at providing a myriad of support services for them. In addition, New Haven has been historically known to be at the forefront of innovative thinking and initiatives to provide the best services for the youth in our city.

Senator, Representative and Members, as the Youth Services Specialist working for the Youth Service Bureau of New Haven, I applaud everyone's effort in working toward solutions to improving the lives of our youth. We are forever lucid that we could never have enough services for such a population with such diverse needs. New Haven youth-serving organizations are dedicated to the prevention of youth violence and gang activity; however, it is imperative that resources be made available to ensure the success of our youth—without such would be making brick without straw. We are in support of House Bill # 6703 and would be honored to assist in this initiative and be a part of the process .primarily because New Haven is virtually doing this in varying capacities currently

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 203 946 8583 or sdriffin@newhavenct.net .



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JAMES C. ROVELLA
CHIEF OF POLICE

TESTIMONY OF CHIEF JAMES C. ROVELLA, HARTFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT
TO THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE IN SUPPORT OF
H.B. 6703
AN ACT CONCERNING YOUTH VIOLENCE AND GANG ACTIVITY.

April 15, 2013

Senator Coleman, Representative Fox, and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee., I am currently the Chief of Police of the City of Hartford Connecticut and have been a police officer in excess of thirty-one years in the State of Connecticut. This testimony is submitted on behalf of the **Hartford Police Department** in support of H.B. 6703, An Act Concerning Youth Violence and Gang Activity.

The City of Hartford has made great strides in reducing violence Those advances have been achieved in a variety of different means to include but not limited to; restructuring and re-directing the efforts of the police department, collaboration and cooperation between numerous agencies including other city departments along with our state and federal partners.

The Hartford Police Department has engaged in several different areas outside the normal response to crime and patrol duties, in a positive manner which is beginning to pay dividends in the areas of preventing youth delinquency and gang violence.

Section 2(b) of the raised bill addresses youth services and community based services to identify children and youths at risk of coming into contact with the juvenile system and ways and areas on how to do that.

In the city of Hartford we have already begun to apply a strategy to address these specific concerns such as: Police Athletic League (PAL), PROSPER, Faith Based Ministries, A Special Investigative Division solely dedicated to Domestic Violence and the revamping of our School Resources Officers under DMC (Disproportionate Minority Contact).

Preventing Recidivism through Organized Supervision, Partnerships, and Enhanced Relationships (PROSPER), the police department, with analytical data, devised a cooperative effort with the Department of Probation. Since 2011, HPD, Community Service Officers (CSO) partner with a Probation officer to handle approximately 80 high-risk clients. There has been a significant reduction in the re-arrest rates in this high-risk population and Officers have noticed an increase in clients enrolling in schools, obtaining driver's licenses and employment. This type of collaboration works due to the random visits and the ability to develop a positive interaction and relationship with the individual's family as well as the individual themselves. This program should be enhanced and grow to include Juvenile offenders.

Police Athletic League (PAL), these children are the cities most at risk population The children are often from a single parent who is working or trying to work during the times the children are alone or without the supervision of an adult The parent and the children want that positive interaction with a police officer. The after school program engages children in homework/ schoolwork, athletics, other activities. A nutritious dinner is provided prior to their departure. This program is in need of enhancement and expansion along with site development. Additions to this program include young paid mentors.



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JAMES C. ROVELLA
CHIEF OF POLICE

Faith Based Ministries, Their influence and guidance is a force for the reduction or escalation of violence and prevention of youth delinquency. Three Hartford Police Community Service Officers are dedicated to the endeavor on a full time basis, one for each district of the city. The officer's duties and responsibilities include organization, structure and block watch formulation in each of their districts. This endeavor is the forming of a virtual army of devoted individuals willing to engage youth in positive guidance.

Beginning in June, 2013, the Domestic Violence Unit will engage in a very important prevention measures. The unit will identify the children who witness or surround the victim and offender of domestic violence. Those children drive our aggravated assault statistics five, ten and fifteen years down the road because it is a learned behavior. The unit forward those children to services to agencies better equipped to handle future issues such as anger management.

Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) and School Resource Officers (SRO) agreement is requiring schools and police to engage in Memoranda of Agreement (MOAs) in communities where police are stationed within their local public schools, this fosters the collaboration necessary to ensure police officers do not replace school administrators in administering school discipline resulting in arrests for lower level, non-criminal offenses. It ensures that police stationed within schools stay focused on keeping students safe on a daily basis, and not assuming responsibility for the oversight of student discipline. School based arrests have dramatically declined, keeping juveniles out of our criminal justice system at an early age.

The Hartford Police Department already has a model in place to achieve the goals this bill calls for, programs such as these must remain viable and sustainable, if not, then any strides we have made in an individual's life is in jeopardy.

Our commitment to the youth and the citizens of Hartford is all the above and more. These endeavors are specifically tuned to prevention and enhancement of youth rather than reaction and arrest. The city is the focal point for the economic revival and ultimately the survival of the region. I respectfully request the Hartford Police Department be specifically included as a model/pilot program for our ground level initiatives.

I thank you for your time and I will be willing to answer any questions you might have.

Respectfully Submitted,

James C. Rovella
Chief of Police
Hartford Police Department



State of Connecticut

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Good afternoon Chairmen Fox and Coleman, Ranking Members Rebimbas and Kissel, and Members of the Judiciary Committee. I am submitting this testimony in support of House Bill 6703: An Act Concerning Youth Violence and Gang Activity.

I would like to thank the Judiciary Committee for raising this important legislation that was proposed by the House Republican Caucus.

Gang violence pervades our urban communities. Gangs are at the root of many of the crimes committed on the streets of our cities. The first step in curbing this violence is to focus efforts on preventing youth from ever becoming involved in gangs. Raised Bill 6703 seeks to address the recruitment of children or youth into participation in gang activity by making it a crime to knowingly encourage, solicit, recruit, intimidate, or coerce a person under eighteen to commit a crime in order to participate in or remain a member of a criminal gang. Washington State recently passed similar legislation because police found that arresting gang members for committing crimes did not go far enough in discouraging gang activity. Once a gang member ended up in prison, the gang simply recruits new youths to join. Prosecutors and police need a tool to criminalize these recruitment procedures. Connecticut already has laws that attempt to prevent youths from joining gangs through education and school suspension. An Act Concerning Youth Violence and Gang Activity would increase those efforts.

I urge the Judiciary Committee to pass House Bill 6703. Thank you for your consideration of this legislation, and I look forward to the opportunity to debate this bill with the full General Assembly.

Thank you