

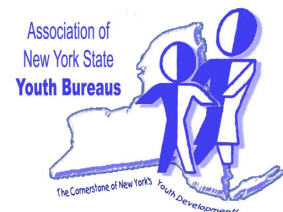
**Testimony
Of
Jacqueline A. Negri, Executive Director
Association of New York State Youth Bureaus
and
Frank Williams, Jr., Executive Director
City of White Plains Youth Bureau and
Board Member, Association of NYS Youth Bureaus
February 10, 2010**

**Before
The Joint Fiscal Committees of the NYS Legislature
on the 2010-2011 Executive Budget**

**Carl Kruger, Chairman, Senate Finance Committee
Liz Krueger, Vice Chairperson, Senate Finance Committee**

and

**Herman D. Farrell, Jr., Chairman, Assembly Ways and
Means Committee**



Good morning honorable chairpersons and other distinguished members of the Legislature. My name is Jackie Negri and I am the Executive Director of the Association of New York State Youth Bureaus (ANYSYB) and with me today is Frank Williams, Executive Director, of the City of White Plains Youth Bureau and an ANYSYB Board Member.

ANYSYB represents New York's Youth Bureau Systems which is comprised of 109 county and municipal youth bureaus providing quality youth development, prevention, intervention services to over 2 million youth, from rural towns and villages, to small cities and urban centers since 1945. The youth bureau system embodies the definition of youth development as an ongoing process in which children and adolescents seek ways to meet their personal and social needs, build life skills and competencies that allow them to be successful and learn how to function effectively in their daily lives. Positive youth development services include, but are not limited to programs that build skills to prepare New York's youth for graduation, work, and civic responsibilities and to prevent them from entering the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. Youth Bureaus and their providers offer school drop-out prevention programs, worker readiness and summer jobs, mentors, supports for runaway and homeless youth, pregnant and parenting teens and youth involved with drugs and gangs and leadership training for civic engagement.

For over 60 years, New York State's Youth Bureau system has provided youth prevention, intervention and development services and programs to more than 2 million young people under the age of 21 throughout the state – nearly half of the youth population.

A recent US Department of Justice investigation of four New York State operated juvenile justice facilities resulted in Governor Paterson appointing a Task Force of Juvenile Justice experts to identify recommendations for improving conditions within placement and alternatives to detention. The Task Force report entitled, "Charting a New Course: A Blueprint for Transforming Juvenile Justice Reform in New York" was released in December 2009. The report included numerous recommendations and strategies, including reducing the use of institutional placements, and the most compelling recommendation was to keep more kids at home and shift to community services. But how can we keep more kids at home and in the community and offer alternatives to detention/placement to elected judges without ensuring community safety and expert services? How can we keep kids safe in the community and engaged in afterschool programming? How can we prepare kids for future work and employment? In an environment in which over \$200 million in funding for community youth service are slated to be cut from the state budget in 2010-11, we cannot.

The ability to link youth and their families with a full range of community based supports and youth development requires the partnership of state and local government with youth bureaus and community providers. The Task Force recommends development and expansion of community based alternatives and the redirection of cost savings achieved by reducing reliance on placement into the neighborhoods where the highest numbers of youth in placement live. Yet despite these recommendations, the Governor's budget adds \$18.2 million to fund remediation of the state's OCFS operated facilities, achieves \$3 million in savings by downsizing the state system by 180 beds, but does not expand funding for evidenced based alternatives to detention/placement, afterschool or summer youth employment. Actually, it eliminates

funding for these community based alternatives and in some instances, zeros out the programs. This ultimately, dismantles New York's community-based youth development and prevention system.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION PROGRAM (YDDP) AND SPECIAL DELINQUENCY PREVENTION PROGRAM (SDPP), AND THE RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH PROGRAM (RHYA)

Youth development and prevention services which are offered, supported and coordinated through the youth bureau system need to be kept intact for all of New York's youth, including hundreds of thousands of high-risk youth. Over the past 2 years, the Youth Development and Delinquency Prevention Program (YDDP) and Special Delinquency Prevention Program (SDPP), and the Runaway and Homeless Youth Program (RHYA) have suffered nearly a 30% reduction in funding. Due to the manner in which these funding streams are allocated, targeted savings have been achieved through a reduction in their annual allocations, therefore at times taking a full annualized hit due to past Aids to Localities reductions.

RECOMMENDATION:

SUPPORT THE GOVERNOR'S PROPOSAL TO FUND YDDP, SDPP & RHYA AS PROPOSED;

- The Youth Development and Delinquency Prevention Program (YDDP) and Special Delinquency Prevention Program (SDPP), at \$28,243,400, an increase of \$784,567 from SFY 2009-10 and the Runaway Homeless and Youth Program at \$4,711,600, an increase of \$130,933 from SFY 2009-10.

IN ADDITION, THE CHILDREN'S CABINET MUST EXAMINE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND PREVENTION

- Require the NYS Governor's Children's Cabinet to: examine the current youth development, prevention and intervention system and make recommendations for a system that cost-effectively serves the best interest and needs of the 2 million youth engaged; establishes statewide quality indicators; assures that such funding streams reaches youth in all counties and cities, towns and villages in New York State and formalizes a statewide Youth Development Agenda that can be more formidably linked with other systems of care.

ALTERNATIVES TO DETENTION/PLACEMENT

The techniques that have been found to be most effective for youth with conduct disorder, violent acting out and substance abuse problems are also the programs and services that represent the backbone of alternative to detention/placement programs. The best of these techniques include:

- Functional Family Therapy and Multisystemic Therapy – these are two well documented and highly successful family intervention programs for at-risk youth ages 11-18 and their families. For a cost of approximately \$2500-\$5,000 per youth, the interventions can be applied in either clinic or in-home sessions;
- Day Placement and Day Supervision – as an alternative to out-of-home placement, youth and families can be offered day placement that include access to outpatient substance abuse treatment and mental health services such as FFT and MST.
- Positive Youth Development Framework – any services that are offered as alternatives to detention/placement must be applied according to positive youth development principles that build upon or

enhance the youth and/or family strengths and competencies; this is an essential component of alternative to detention/placement programs.

FUNDING MODELS: Nationally, the most effective financing models of alternative to detention/placement programs include Illinois and 222, where the state provides 65% reimbursement for alternatives to detention/placement services and local governments must provide 35% of the cost.

RECOMMENDATION:

Given the budget crisis in New York, the \$3 million in state savings estimated by the 180 bed closings should be used as the state's 65% contribution in 2010 and should be increased by a minimum of \$7 million, or the equivalent of 65% of the state savings achieved through reduction in state operated costs and the state share of secure and non-secure placements. This methodology allows reinvestment of state funding into alternatives to detention/placement. Reinvestment eligible services should include evidence-based alternatives. Allocations should be provided to communities proportionately by the number of out-of-home youth placements.

SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT and ADVANTAGE AFTERSCHOOL

Thousands of New York State teens are positively impacted each year with the help of a summer job. Data shows that a summer job not only generates income for local communities as spending is invested back into the community, but the work experience gives summer youth workers an alternative to street corners where crime and drugs are often prevalent. Moreover, because of the worsening economic environment, a summer job provides help to households where, in many cases, a family is receiving public assistance. The problem is especially alarming in low-income, minority communities where the jobless rate for high school students is hovering near 90 percent. According to an analysis released by Andrew Sum, director of Northeastern University's Center for Labor Market Studies, employment rates among teenagers have dropped nearly four times faster than the rate among adults since 2000. According to the study, it is especially bleak for low-income black students; only 4 in 100 found work this past fall. In addition, studies show that individuals that are unable to find jobs in their early years have higher rates of dropping out of school and are more likely to commit crimes. These risks paint a bleak future for our youth if summer employment funding for a total of \$35 million is fully eliminated. An investment in teen summer jobs is an investment in our country's future.

After School, which is administered by the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), is a high quality program that provides critical services to New York's children and families especially during these tough economic times. The SFY 2009-10 appropriation, as reduced in the 2009 Deficit Reduction Plan (DRP) was \$28,166,937, funded from State and TANF funds. The SFY 2010-11 recommendation is to completely fund the program with State funds totaling \$17,255,300. This would result in a decrease of \$11 million from the revised SFY 2009-10 appropriation. TANF Federal funds have been eliminated in SFY 2010-11 to support this program. As a result of this proposed loss in funding, we anticipate that after-school programs will be forced to reduce the number of kids served; the number of staff employed at these sites and will ultimately close. Parents who depended on a high-quality, daily programming will no longer have a safe place for their children to go while they are working. These programs also provide much needed employment opportunities for community members. Consistent participation in quality after-school programs helps reduce youth experimentation with alcohol and other dangerous drugs, and reduces the risk of teen pregnancy. A survey of New York teenagers conducted by Fight Crime: Invest in Kids found that teens

unsupervised afterschool were four times as likely to have smoked cigarettes, three times as likely to have had sex, and four times as likely to have used drugs than teens who were supervised.

RECOMMENDATION:

The removal of over \$200 million in TANF funds from critical community based youth service programs to close the current budget gap is unacceptable to the most needy of children and families. We urge you to support Summer Youth Employment (\$35 million) and Advantage Afterschool (\$11 million TANF) through the continuation of state funding and restoration in TANF funding,

On behalf of the 2 million youth being served by positive youth development, prevention and intervention services we thank you for this opportunity and offer our assistance and that of the Association of NYS Youth Bureaus on issues, data or questions of concern regarding New York's Youth Development System.

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