



Town Meetings: Buffalo NY
Saturday November 17, 2007
2008-09 State Budget

Testimony Presented by
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I am here representing the Association of NYS Youth Bureaus and my agency, the Genesee County Youth Bureau. I have 27 years of experience with this system having started with the City of Lockport Youth Bureau in 1980. I moved to Genesee County in 1987 and also led a joint youth bureau with Orleans and Genesee County from 1991 until 2002.

The Youth Bureau system in New York State is well grounded emphasizing **local planning** and design in response to identification of **local needs**. Through these local strategies of coordination and planning, Youth Bureaus administer, monitor and supervise a number of youth development programs; including: Youth Development Delinquency Prevention. (YDDP) This is our primary funding stream, and provides youth development programming in every town and village across the state. What I like best about it is the equity that it provides with a formula based on youth population. Services are provided for all youth. "Flat funding" for many years has worked to undermine the successes already achieved through YDDP and severely compromise future achievements. It must not be cut.

Our system also oversees Special Delinquency Prevention Program (SDPP); Runaway and Homeless Youth programs; projects under the Workforce Investment Act.

In Genesee County we are able to provide The Catholic Charities School Intervention Service for troubled Families. Through the Genesee and Orleans Youth Bureau, children of alcoholics are nurtured and counseled in a year round support group, and treated to summer camp. Children in foster care are protected by volunteers in the Court Appointed Special Advocates Program. Our LeRoy Christian Community Project provides a safe haven through a Friday night drop in program for teens. Leadership opportunities are enhanced through our local cooperative

Extension Government Intern program and Shadow Jury. These are just a few examples of the valuable programming that is provided through the youth bureau system, not to mention that there are recreation opportunities at the town and village level, providing young people with safe and wholesome activities during out of school time.

The system of Youth Bureaus has evolved well beyond coordinators of service, having developed comprehensive infrastructures that administer programs, measure outcomes and demand enhanced accountability that exceed the responsibilities contemplated by current funding streams. We know that outcome measurement and accountability are a focus of this administration. This is what we do, use us to further those goals.

The Association requests enhanced fiscal support for these vital youth programs together with additional direct fiscal support for Youth Bureaus in recognition of the additional responsibilities they assume relating to enhanced accountability, program monitoring and outcome measurement. Youth Bureaus are committed to providing community-based youth development programs and primary prevention services and respectfully request continued state support for these programs at levels that adequately reflect increases in delivery of such services, including the cost of living. We are also supportive of the Coalition for After School Funding and their requests.

Our system of Youth Bureaus stands ready to work with the Spitzer administration and assist in the implementation of the strategies that would fulfill your goals and objectives for youth development in this state.