



Testimony on behalf of the Founder of Youth Entrepreneurs in support of the 119K

Commission:

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March 26, 2024

The Honorable Mayor Elinor Carbone, Andrew Ferguson, and Josh Brown

Co-Chairs, CCM 119K Commission

c/o Connecticut Conference of Municipalities

Dear Mayor Carbone, Mr. Ferguson, and Mr. Brown,

I write to you today with deep admiration for the pivotal work being undertaken by the CCM 119K Commission on At-Risk and Disconnected Youth. As the founder of Youth Entrepreneurs, an organization committed to empowering young people to realize their full potential through entrepreneurship, I am keenly aware of the critical need for coordinated efforts across federal, state, and local levels to address the systemic challenges facing our youth. Youth Entrepreneurs operates at the grassroots level, engaging directly with young people in communities across Connecticut. Our programs are designed to equip youth with the skills, resources, and support they need to succeed in today's rapidly changing world. Through mentorship, training, and access to networks, we strive to empower young people to chart their own paths and pursue their entrepreneurial aspirations.



In our work, we have seen firsthand the transformative power of effective system coordination. When federal, state, and local agencies collaborate seamlessly, young people are better able to access the resources and support they need to thrive. We have seen success stories emerge when these systems work in harmony, providing wraparound services that address the multifaceted needs of at-risk and disconnected youth. At the same time, we recognize that there are still significant gaps in the coordination of services for youth across different levels of government. Too often, young people fall through the cracks due to disjointed systems and fragmented approaches.

As such, I offer the following insights and recommendations to the CCM 119K Commission:

Enhanced Communication Channels: Foster open lines of communication and information sharing between federal, state, and local agencies to ensure that all stakeholders are aligned in their efforts to support at-risk and disconnected youth.

Streamlined Referral Processes: Develop streamlined referral processes to ensure that young people are seamlessly connected to the services and resources they need, regardless of which level of government they interact with initially.

Data Integration: Invest in technologies and systems that facilitate the integration of data across federal, state, and local agencies, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of the needs of at-risk and disconnected youth and informing targeted interventions.

Resource Allocation: Advocate for increased funding and resources to support collaborative initiatives that bridge the gap between federal, state, and local efforts to address youth disconnection.

Community Engagement: Prioritize community engagement and grassroots involvement in the development and implementation of policies and programs aimed at supporting at-risk and disconnected youth, ensuring that solutions are responsive to the unique needs of local communities.

In conclusion, I commend the CCM 119K Commission for its commitment to addressing the systemic challenges facing at-risk and disconnected youth. By working collaboratively across federal, state, and local levels, we have the opportunity to make a meaningful and lasting impact on the lives of young people across our state. Youth Entrepreneurs stands ready to support these



efforts in any way we can and looks forward to continued collaboration with the Commission and its partners.

Thank you for your dedication to this critical mission.

Sincerely,

Dr. Laquita Joyner-McGraw

Founder/Executive Director, Youth Entrepreneurs