



GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL

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Testimony submitted to the House Appropriations Committee

March 7, 2024

The City of Greenbelt strongly supports House Bill 1136 which will provide funding for Youth Services Bureaus (YSB). The City began its partnership with the State in the early 1970s to provide delinquency prevention and intervention services based on funds from both the State and local government. Since its beginning, Greenbelt CARES Youth Service Bureau has provided mental health services, in particular family counseling services to assist youth and their families. When the funding was originated in the State, Youth Service Bureaus were placed under the Department of Juvenile Services and continue statutorily there today. Over these past fifty plus years, Greenbelt CARES has successfully been monitored by the Department of Juvenile Services and has maintained its designation as a Youth Service Bureau. The return of YSB funding to the Youth Services Bureaus will allow this long-term partnership to be re-established.

Greenbelt CARES Youth Service Bureau provides effective services to our community and is able to be responsive to local needs that arise. Greenbelt CARES offers families a safe place to address difficult issues such as truancy, violence, trauma, bullying, depression and suicidal ideation. Greenbelt CARES believes that the best way to serve a youth is by working with the entire family system to ensure that the youth and caregivers all learn new skills and strategies to decrease problem behavior. Greenbelt CARES works closely with our Police Department to assist youth and families in crisis and to provide resources and mental health services. In addition, the program offers educational supports through tutoring and GED preparation to ensure all youth are academically successful.

The funding this bill provides would increase the wrap-around and preventative services desperately needed to address growing youth mental health needs and to address juvenile crime in our community. The services are proven to work in keeping young people out of the criminal justice system, with Youth Services Bureaus consistently having a 95% success rate in diverting youth from juvenile services.

We respectfully request that you support the funding of Youth Services Bureaus by voting in favor of this legislation.