



CYSA Advocacy Committee Update 2021

Hello CYSA Membership!

My name is Barbara Lockhart, and I am the Director of Youth Services for the town of Montville, located in New London County, CT. I am also the Chairperson for the CYSA Advocacy Committee, and I wanted to share with all of you some of the work we have been doing advocating for ALL YSBs across Connecticut!

According to the CYSA By-laws: The Advocacy Committee identifies advocacy issues pertaining to children, youth and families, develops CYSA's legislative advocacy plan working closely with the Lobbyist, and keep members informed of the status of any advocacy issues.

Advocacy planning meetings were held on December 14th, 2020 & January 4th, 2021

When the Legislative session opened in January 2021, the advocacy team hit the ground running, making plans to meet with key legislators, addressing bills of interest or concern, preparing to testify on these bills, as well as testifying at public hearings and submitting electronic testimony which may affect or impact YSBs. CYSA Lobbyist, Jay Aronson maintains constant communication with Legislators and staff, and reports regularly to the CYSA Executive Board and the Advocacy Committee to share bills that may be of interest, information he has learned as well as and regular weekly updates.

Juvenile Justice Liaison, Erica Bromley, has been tirelessly advocating to acquire funding for the Community Based Diversion Plan which would be directly funneled to YSBs. The need for our resources, support, and services continues to increase. During the Pandemic, YSBs jumped to the frontline to help as much as we could in our communities, and we anticipate our support will be needed just as much over the next couple of years as we attempt to transition back to some sense of "normalcy".

Laying the groundwork: On February 4th, Members of the CYSA Advocacy Team/CYSA Exec Board, President Justin Carbonella, Vice President, Scott Cochran, JJ Liaison Erica Bromley, CYSA Lobbyist, Jay Aronson, & CYSA Advocacy Chair, Barbara Lockhart met with the Chair, Representative Toni Walker, and Co-Chair, Senator Cathy Osten, of the Appropriations Committee via zoom to reinforce the need to support & fully fund YSBs, as well as to support the Community Based Diversion plan. I believe that both Justin and Erica effectively communicated the importance and values of YSBs across our state!

On February 8th Lyme/Old Lyme YSB director Mary Seidner and Old Lyme youth testified at the Public Health committee proposed Senate Bill 326: **An Act Prohibiting the Sale of Flavored Cigarettes, Tobacco Products, Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems & Vapor Products.**

CYSA Vice President Scott Cochran, with the help of Madison's Prevention Specialist Catherine Barden, updated CYSA's most recent response to the Governor's Recreational Marijuana Bill SB 888: **An Act Responsibly and Equitably Regulating Adult use of Cannabis**, which was submitted as electronic testimony. A copy of this statement can be found on the CYSA website.

Connecticut Youth Services Association leads, strengthens and supports a unified network of Youth Service Bureaus dedicated to promoting the well-being of Connecticut's children, youth and families.

P.O. BOX 551, Glastonbury, CT 06033

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On March 3rd, 2021 at the Public Hearing on DCF's Budget, YSBs boasted a strong presence with both youth from (Montville & Middletown) as well YSB folks, **who all knocked it out of the park with their testimonies!** Please visit CT-N.com, or search on [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) (under Appropriations Committee Public Hearing for Human service Agencies) to view testimonials. You can also visit www.ctyouthservices.org to access copies of electronic testimony.

Please feel free to reach out to the CYSA Board, their contact information is located on the CYSA website or email me directly; barbara@montvilleyouth.org

Barbara

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