

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 299A

Dear Chair Wilde and Members of the Committee,

I ask your support of SB 299A. As a retired clinical psychologist who has worked with hundreds of children in schools, mental health centers, and private practice, and as a former Girl Scout leader, I see the impact that good use of out-of-school time has on a child's development. I have several concerns about the future for our children that this bill addresses:

- In this age of easy screen time, it becomes increasingly easy to care for children while not enriching them. Research is beginning to show that too much time on screens in a child's free time has negative impacts on learning and development.
- Because of fears of possible dangers, we no longer have "free range" kids as we used to. Lack of ability to engage in creative play with peers or to pursue creative outlets greatly shapes the way our children will develop into adults.
- Activity fees for so many programs exclude the children that need these out of school programs most. We need to find a way to expand availability of a range of programs for children that leads to better functioning and more positive development.
- The up and down nature of funding for children's programs consumes way too much time in seeking grants, adapting to budget cuts, and reconstituting programs as funding becomes available again. I yearn for a chance for good programs to also be stable programs that are accessible to many children.

Others have addressed the issues of compression and community control so I will not belabor these points. This bill provides no compulsion to do more for our children, but it opens the door for those communities that care to act on this need.

Thank you,

Carol Greenough, Ph.D.
Retired Clinical Psychologist