

On Saturday, December 5th, I, along with members of my 1st Congressional District Youth Cabinet, was proud to join Connecticut Speaker of the House Christopher Donovan and the General Assembly's Task Force on the Children in the Recession for their first of five public hearings. The public hearing titled "How is the Recession Affecting Your Family", allowed children from the 1st Congressional District to testify on how our state and nation's currently economic situation is affecting their families and their own personal life.

The Youth Cabinet, assisted Speaker Donovan's Office and the Connecticut Commission on Children in planning the hearing, served as honorary members of the task force for the hearing. They had the opportunity to join the Task Force on the dais to ask questions and provide comments based on individual's testimony.

Calvin Brown, a junior from Bristol Central High School and member of the Youth Cabinet, provided poignant remarks on behalf of the cabinet and children all across the state on the effects of the current economic situation on our youth

"From my fellow students at Bristol Eastern High School, one of my friends is lacking the ability to find a good job, a trouble which is unfortunately matched by both of her parents. To young men and women in schools in California, Texas and Virginia, people all over these United States are feeling the deep and far extending effects of the poor economy.

“From a Hartford junior who knows he cannot afford college to a 5th grader in Southington who has no lights on in her home, everyone is touched by this recession, and it’s time for a change to be made. How can we as a society look at the pained faces of young people and sit idly by.

“They must not be denied the care and resources that they need to live and get on the path to finding their own American dream.”

I am truly proud of the work the Youth Cabinet has accomplished in its first year of existence. I have great belief in our democracy, and it grows stronger by the day, whenever I meet or hear a member of the cabinet speak. As Calvin stated, “The stories told will mark the beginning of a new chapter for the way children interact with their government.”

I created the Congressional Youth Cabinet, the first of its kind in the country, as a means to provide me with information and personal insight on issues facing young Americans in Connecticut and across the nation. I would like to thank Speaker Donovan and Co-Chairs of the Task Force, Representatives Karen Jarmoc and Diana Urban, for inviting the Youth Cabinet to participate in the hearing.

Press Coverage of the Public Hearing

New Britain Herald

As Southington High School junior Isabelle Palumbo took a seat at the state capitol’s legislative office building Saturday, she brought with her a message of teenagers caught in the effects of a recession they didn’t create and could not control.

“The recession has taken its toll on children, especially teens, not only in the mental

sense but the physical sense as well in regard to our schools,” she told a task force made up of legislators and representatives from social agencies.

Palumbo, a member of U.S. Rep. John Larson’s Youth Cabinet, joined with the task force to listen, and learn, from younger members of the community on how the economic downturn was changing their lives.

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The Tattoo-Youth International Journalism

From an ancient professor testifying on welfare to a 4-year-old girl whose only comment was her name, a wide variety of people came out to testify Saturday before the state legislature’s Task Force on Children in the Recession.

Most of those who spoke were young, but not all.

It is time that “youth counted in on the discussion and partisan gridlock counted out,” said Calvin Brown, a 17-year-old junior at Bristol Eastern High School.

“The stories told today will mark a new” era “in the interaction between children and their government,” said Brown, a member of U.S. Rep. John Larson’s Congressional Youth Cabinet.

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