

U.S. Representative Wm. Lacy Clay MO01

U.S. Representative John B. Larson CT01



First Congressional Youth Cabinet

Saturday February 18, 2012

At 10 a.m. our video conference meeting with the MO CYC began. Congressman Wm. Lacy Clay of Missouri's first district provided welcoming remarks and introduced his CYC to Congressman Larson and the CT CYC. In his remarks, Congressman shared that his CYC participated in organizing a "Town Hall Teleconference" on the issue of bullying in his district. Constituent interest in being a part of this discussion was overwhelming, more than 15,000 households in Missouri's first district participated in the call.

CT CYC Co-Chairs Sarah Hague (Barkhamsted) and Calvin Brown (Bristol) then asked MO CYC Chair, Sydney Everett of St. Louis to provide a welcome and begin the introductions of the MO CYC members. Calvin and Sarah then had CT CYC members introduce themselves.

After introductions and welcoming remarks, Calvin and Sarah moved onto the second item on the agenda which was information from CT CYC members on "How a CYC Works"

CYC members from MO asked questions related to how CT identifies the issue areas they choose work on with the Congressman. MO members also asked CT members to provide examples of key issue events that they've been either a part of, or a catalyst for.

CT members shared the development of meeting rules and the framework of how they identify issues and their work with the Congressman as a process that has developed over time and is continuing to develop. They stated that since this is a new form of collaboration between young citizens and government, it was important that the partnership between the youth members and Congressman Larson evolve through a shared respect for one another's perspective, insights, knowledge and together identify the most comfortable way in which to collaborate.

The CT members spoke of their first report on the status of youth in the first district that they presented to Congressman Larson last October. Congressman Larson shared with Congressman Clay that he would like to take the CT CYC to D.C. to have them present highlights of their report before the House Democratic Caucus, and that perhaps the MO members could participate as well. Congressman Clay agreed that it was a good idea and said that he would look for ways in which to make such a trip happen for his CYC members.

MO members asked how the CT meetings look on a month to month basis?

MO had a question about how CYC members who move onto to college out of state stay in touch with what's happening with CYC business.

Bullying

Guests: Dr. Andrea C. Kandel, Executive Director of the National Conference for Community & Justice for Connecticut and Western Massachusetts

Dr. Patrick Nickoletti, Associate Professor, Human Development and Family Studies, St. Joseph College

Dr. Kandel spoke from her experiences with anti-bullying programs the "Yes Campaign" and the "Camp Anytown" program. These types of programs emphasize the importance of being understanding and accepting of other people's differences. CYC members agree that it's important to recognize that not all young people are raised in homes where lessons of acceptance are taught from an early age. Therefore, it's important to provide avenues outside of the home for young people to learn how to interact positively with their peers.

CYC Members felt strongly that it's important to connect to not only the people who are being bullied, but also those who do the bullying.

Schools that take a preventive approach to bullying are far more successful in realizing a safe environment and connected community within their walls, than those that take a reactive approach.

Dr. Nickoletti shared that schools in CT are conflicted in terms of personnel reporting bullying behaviors because state regulations are almost punitive to those who do so.

It was discussed that the federal and state governments are in desperate need of information as to what works in terms of anti-bullying programs, and what does not. We are just beginning to understand the efficacy of current programs that are being used in schools across the country.

What all members and guests felt was of utmost importance was an increase in public awareness of the issue of bullying that will help to develop a grassroots effort to inspire entire communities to come together to address all forms of violence and hate behaviors.

Dr. Nickoletti believes that this generation of youth, and in particular the youth engaged in partnerships with government officials such as the CYCs, have a tremendous opportunity to change the common paradox-to support programs that begin with very young children and their understanding of

Not enough support from high levels. We need high level of awareness that bullying is an important issue. Relate it to how well an individual can focus on school, then what that means to the culture of the greater community, the country, and our global neighbors.

A CYC member asked if there are ways to incentivize schools to “do the right thing” in terms of taking bullying interventions seriously. It was also asked of the Congressmen if they envision bullying laws that mandates that schools implement ‘anti-bullying” programs and consequences of bad behaviors that are proven to be effective. Both Congressmen said that they would

The development of strong teacher mentors and student mentors in schools was cited by our guest experts and CYC members as an important tool to supporting students to engage in positive behaviors. PN Community involvement should be the logical consequence of bullying. A CYC member asked in reaction to Dr. Nickoletti’s statement, if Congress could mandate this type of intervention?

Dr. Kandel and Dr. Nickoletti were asked by CYC members about effective mentoring programs that have “train the trainers” components that have been most effective. Dr. Nickoletti shared that he believed Dr. Kenneth Dodge, Director Center for Child and Family Policy, Duke University may be a good resource for information on good “train the trainers” mentoring curriculum.

Closing remarks: JBL: How can we get our CYC up online where issues are highlighted and have action steps that are being taken shared with anyone who accesses the congressional websites?

Meeting of the combined Connecticut and Missouri First Congressional Youth Cabinet adjourned at Noon.

Action Item: Create MO & CT CYC Facebook Page to allow for CYC members to interact with one another in between meetings.

Next meeting of the CT CYC: Saturday, March 24, 2012 with special guest Connecticut Secretary of State, Denise Merrill for a discussion on “Youth Engagement” Secretary Merrill is looking forward to hearing your ideas for bringing more Connecticut youth to civic activities. Attached to this email is the recently released report “Connecticut’s Civic Health.” If you take the time to read this fairly brief report, it should help you in your conversation with the Secretary.

Congressman Larson will be at the March meeting.

Respectfully submitted: E.M.B.