



UP THE GRADES

Comprehensive Education and Training Act – (CETA): Goldson's New Haven Youth Action Plan

Central to our mission as public servants is protecting, nurturing and shaping our young people – Central to our mission, as a government is to provide quality education to our taxpayers. Youth violence in New Haven is a direct result of the policies of the city, state and federal government, which have failed to nurture and properly educate our young people. The best way to combat youth violence is to educate our youth.

Higher education is vital to economic success. We must invest the same energy and capital in our human development as we invest in our economic development. By providing adequate educational opportunities for our youth, job and business opportunities will follow, our need to invest in social service and prisoner maintenance programs will decline, the taxpayer base will expand, leading to eventual reductions in individual contributions to the government.

We must aim for a zero dropout rate in our New Haven school system. Let us make New Haven a Mecca for learning.

With an overall reduction of 0.27% from each department in the proposed state budget, every teenager enrolled in New Haven could have a summer job for three years and college tuition paid four years.

The Problem

New studies by experts at Columbia, Princeton, and Harvard show that young men, particularly poorly educated African American men, are becoming ever more disconnected from the mainstream society.

The studies show that finishing high school is the exception and prison is almost routine, with incarceration rates climbing for blacks. These were among the recent findings:

- The share of young black men without jobs has climbed relentlessly. In 2004, 72% of black male high school dropouts in their 20's were jobless — that is, unable to find work, not seeking it or incarcerated, Even when high school graduates were included, half of black men in their 20's were jobless in 2004, up from 46% in 2000.



- Incarceration rates climbed in the 1990's and reached historic highs in the past few years. By 2004, 21% of black men in their 20's who did not attend college were in jail or prison. By their mid-30's, 6 in 10 black men who had dropped out of school had spent time in prison.
- In the inner cities, more than half of all black men do not finish high school.¹

In New Haven:

- At James Hillhouse High School, which is located in the 93rd District, 35.1% of the students do not graduate, compared to 89.9 % statewide.
- Annually in New Haven, 6.1% of the high school students drop out, compared to 1.8% throughout the state.
- CAPT testing in 2005, 52.3% tested below proficiency in math, 44.9% in science, 46.5% in reading, and 41% in writing.²

Clearly, something is missing. Youth, when questioned, will readily comment that they have lost hope and confidence in the “system”, and feel that education is worthless to their lives.

Regarding the education and employment of our youth, there is clearly a failure of leadership.

A Solution

As the State Representative representing the 93rd District in New Haven, I would propose a **Comprehensive Education Training Act (CETA)**, which would pilot for 5 years in New Haven. CETA would:

- Youth Employment - Guarantee summer employment to all youth who maintain certain grade point averages and attendance records
- Grade and Attendance Rewards - Provide financial incentives for youth who maintain certain grade point and attendance records
- Guaranteed Higher Education for All - Amend the Connecticut Constitution to guarantee free or reduced higher education for all Conn. Graduates.

CETA Goals

The overall goals of this component would be to:

- 1) Increasing attendance by providing incentives for youth to stay in school
- 2) Increasing academic success by providing incentives for youth to excel
- 3) Provide needed staffing and resources in their communities in after school and summer programs for younger children



- 4) Reducing youth crime and violence by positively engaging the youth during the crucial summer months
- 5) Boost CAPT scores by providing real incentives for the youth to excel
- 6) Boost grades by demonstrating the correlation between good grades and future success

CETA vs. Prison

\$7469 vs. \$29,506

In Connecticut, the annual cost for the maintenance of a prisoner is \$29,506 (five-year cost \$147,530).³ With the CETA program, the cost would be \$7469 per youth (five-year cost \$37,345).⁴ Why not make the investment now, and reap the dividends, rather than pay a much higher cost for a longer time later.

Youth Employment

CETA would guarantee summer youth employment to all youth enrolled in New Haven public high schools in the 9th, 10th and 11th grades that maintain adequate grade point averages and attendance records. The school system would partner with public, private and faith-based organizations to administer the program at minimal cost. The youth hired could be used to staff summer activities and programs for younger children in their communities.

Presently, there are 4488 youth enrolled in the 9th through the 11th grades in the New Haven system.⁵ With 75% (3366) of those youth participating in the program at \$1000 per, this component of CETA would cost **\$3,366,000**.

Grade and Attendance Awards

CETA would provide cash incentive awards to all youth enrolled in New Haven public high schools in the 9th through 12th grades who maintain adequate grade point averages and attendance records. At the end of each marking period, youth would be provided with awards of up to \$100.

Presently, there are 5395 youth enrolled in the 9th through 12th grades.⁶ With 75% (4046) participating at \$400 per year, this component of CETA would cost **\$1,213,875**.



Higher Education for All

CETA would provide tuition awards to all youth graduating from New Haven public high schools that maintain adequate grade point averages and attendance records, to attend an in-state college.

Presently, there are 902³ youth graduating annually from New Haven high schools.⁷ With 75% (677) participating at \$6096⁸ per year, this component of CETA would cost **\$4,123,944** annually.

The total cost for CETA over a five-year period would be **\$43,519,095**. This number may seem daunting, but it equals less than 1/3 of 1% of the state's appropriated budget, and equals 7% of the Department of Corrections \$614,833,047 budget.⁹

How to Pay for the Initiative

No new revenues would be needed for this program.

The overall five-year cost of CETA would be **\$43,519,095**. The annual cost would be **\$8,703,819**.

The act would propose that the funding for this program would come from an overall reduction of 0.27% from each department budget.

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1. New York Times, March 20, 2006, Erick Eckholm, Plight Deepens for Black Men, Studies Show
 2. Connecticut Department of Education, www.
 3. Connecticut Department of Corrections, www.
 4. Cost Based on 2006 Tuition fees for the University of Connecticut
 5. Connecticut Department of Education, Enrollment Rates, www.
 6. Connecticut Department of Education, Enrollment Rates, www.
 7. Connecticut Department of Education, Graduation Rates, www.
 8. University of Connecticut 2006t Tuition Fees
 9. Department of Corrections Budget Request, FY2006-07 Governor's Midterm Budget Adjustments, pg B-127