



**SCHOLARS**  
STRATEGY NETWORK

## **Testimony on Governor's Proposed FY 26-27 Budget for Conservation and Development Agencies**

**Christine C. Caruso**, Wesleyan University

My name is Christine Caruso. I am a parent of a third grader in West Hartford Public Schools (WHPS), a member of the steering committee for the CT Farm to School Collaborative, and an Assistant Professor of the Practice in Food Security and Environmental Justice at Wesleyan University.

Farm to school programs that change purchasing practices to increase local and fresh produce in meal programs, and the CT Grown for CT Kids Grants Program, housed under the Department of Agriculture, is profoundly impactful in supporting kids, farmers, communities, and Connecticut schools. Every dollar invested in these efforts increases economic activity in the state and yields dividends for your constituents. Unfortunately, funding for this program was not included in the Governor's proposed budget. I urge the Appropriations Committee to prioritize the health and nutrition of Connecticut youth and our local farms by continuing funding the CT Grown for CT Kids Grants program at one million dollars per year.