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LARSON ANNOUNCES LEGISLATION TO HELP YOUTH DEAL WITH VIOLENCE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

HARTFORD ♦ U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-1) today announced the City Youth Violence Recovery Act (H.R. 6215), legislation he recently introduced to provide grants to urban communities to help city youth deal with the aftermath of violence in their community. The legislation was the result of discussions with community and municipal leaders and Hartford's delegation to the Connecticut General Assembly concerning youth violence in the City of Hartford. There have been 129 shooting incidents in Hartford since the beginning of 2006 and 19 homicides. After visiting Hartford in July, civil rights leader Congressman John Lewis (D-GA) agreed to work with Larson to introduce the legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives. The bill has 28 original cosponsors.

♦ Through the inspiration of former Hartford Councilman Steve Harris and the hard work of Congressman Lewis, we have created a bill that we hope will help end the cycle of violence, ♦ stated Larson. ♦ While we can never cease trying to stop the root causes of violence, we cannot forget the aftermath it leaves on the streets of our cities. Our urban youth are facing a trauma similar to what is experienced in a war zone. This bill aims to help those children heal and deal with the violence and grow up to be the ones who stop it. ♦

Specifically, the bill would:

- Create a grant program under the Department of Health and Human Services (in consultation with the Department of Justice).
- Award funding to a state mental health agency or a partnership between a state mental health agency and a city agency, other state agency, colleges and universities, nonprofit and other organizations.
- Require grant activities to be directed to urban communities with high or increasing incidence of youth violence.
- Support counseling, mental health services, and mentoring focused on dealing with the aftermath of violence. Would allow up to 15% of funding for violence-prevention education.
- Authorize \$10 million annually for FY07-FY12.

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