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October 14, 2021

Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
NYS Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Re: Poughkeepsie Youth Opportunity Center Funding

Dear Governor Hochul:

I am writing to you with respect to a community-driven initiative to serve the youth of Poughkeepsie that is perfectly aligned with the goals you have stated to combat the rising scourge of violence in our state. Earlier this year, I wrote to your predecessor (enclosed) in regards to the Youth Opportunity Center that the City of Poughkeepsie and Dutchess County have committed to developing. At the time, the Administration had announced that the state would make a significant investment in creating jobs and community activities for at-risk youth across the state. This Youth Opportunity Center would not only greatly benefit local residents, but could serve as a model for other communities throughout the State, particularly for Upstate New York's small cities, which is why I write to respectfully reiterate my request for state funding for this critically important project.

As you may know, this project would convert the former Poughkeepsie YMCA into a facility that houses recreational opportunities and 24-hour childcare, as well as violence prevention, mediation, support group and summer enrichment services. The Opportunity Center would be operated by a coalition comprised of a diverse array of stakeholders in addition to the City of Poughkeepsie and Dutchess County, including local colleges and the local library district, the YMCA of Kingston and Ulster County, Nuvance Health, Mass Design Group, Day One, Community Matters 2 and the Poughkeepsie Farm Project. Further, organizations such as the Poughkeepsie School District, Poughkeepsie Children's Cabinet, Family Services, Inc., Scenic Hudson and the Child Care Council of Dutchess and Putnam plan to work in conjunction as well.

My understanding is that time is limited to allocate remaining funds for this initiative, and that your administration hopes to soon get more funding out the door to communities and organizations that need it. Funding through this initiative would go a long way, as the City of Poughkeepsie, with the help of the County,

seeks to address an array of challenges facing local youth and their families, especially challenges that have been exasperated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Currently, the coalition behind the Youth Opportunity Center have secured approximately half the necessary funding, but are still working on securing the remaining funds necessary to make the long-awaited youth center a reality. It is my hope that the State will recognize the importance of early-intervention efforts for the youth of Dutchess County with a commensurate financial commitment toward this effort. Respectfully, I encourage you to consider dedicating at least \$5 million toward the development of the Youth Opportunity Center.

I appreciate your consideration of this critical request, and I look forward to working with you to tackle the issues impacting Hudson Valley families. As always, please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions regarding this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sue Serino". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Senator Sue Serino
41st District