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Holyoke City Council  
City Council Chambers  
536 Dwight Street  
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Dear Members of the Holyoke City Council:

I write to you today in support of the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Holyoke's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Round One application.

For the last 129 years, the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Holyoke has been an essential resource in our community. The Club was one of five Boys & Girls Clubs to operate an Essential Worker Childcare Program and remained operational throughout all of 2020 serving over 1,000 youth with in-person programs. In addition to this service, the Club conducted amazing work serving food to hundreds of kids a day, closing the digital divide for students by issuing WIFI hotspots and computer devices, establish learning pods for youth so that they could continue their education remotely.

Through Federal funds allocated to the City of Holyoke, the City has the opportunity to make an investment in Holyoke's youth for many years to come. Through the Boys & Girls Club's strategic plan, this first round of ARPA monies can be used to increase the capacity of the Club by 40%, increasing their ability to serve more than 215 youth from their current constrained capacity of 150 youth. Long waitlists at the Club have existed for over the last two decades and there is no question that the Holyoke community has a need and demand for proven youth services like the Boys & Girls Club.

By reimagining the Club's current space, the Boys & Girls Club looks to create a 2,500 square foot childcare space. As our Commonwealth continues on the path of economic recovery, the shortage of available and affordable childcare has prevented many families, including those in Holyoke, from entering back into the workforce. Through this funding the City of Holyoke has the opportunity to make a once in a lifetime investment not only in our youth, but in Holyoke's many working families as well.

Thank you for your consideration of the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Holyoke's application and for your continued work on behalf of the City of Holyoke. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

John C. Velis  
Senator- Second Hampden and Hampshire