



**Public Hearing Testimony of Trinity Lewis  
2022 CT Gun Violence Prevention Advisory Committee  
(Youth Leadership Academy at Hartford Communities That Care, Inc.)**

I just started my freshman year in college and to be honest, I haven't been keeping up with Hartford news. It's not that I don't care about what happens in Hartford, but it feels refreshing that I don't have to wake up every morning and see the news that another person was killed.

Years ago, my older brother told me something I thought I would never hear. He said, "I was shot at."

When he told me, I didn't react. He showed me pictures of the car that had bullets in it. Still no reaction. I just went about my day like what he told me was inevitable, but it's not normal.

Gun violence should never be normal.

Talking about this is like therapy to me because I barely talk about this event. To even think that my brother could've been dead, that my niece and nephew wouldn't have a father to teach them things they need to know, and that my mom could have lost a son. It hurts.

Living in Hartford feels like there's a dark cloud over us that hasn't moved in years. When will the sunshine be in Hartford? When will kids be able to go outside and come back? When will mothers not have to worry about their child coming home safely without getting shot?

People say we're a product of our environment, and in some ways, it is true.

The places we live aren't livable. The streets are dirty, liquor stores are everywhere you turn, the food isn't healthy, and the schools lack resources.

If no one cares about our environment, why should we care about the people who live here?

We're all trying to survive, but why do we have to live like we're in The Hunger Games? Our reality is facing great suffering and injustice, & we are in a fight to the death.

To reduce the effects of this cycle, we can begin to take action by:

- Promoting and educating our community about the importance of mental health and providing information on how to access the services.
- Continuing to fully fund violence prevention and intervention programs.
- Enhancing access to treatment for victims and their families.