

Attn: Appropriations Committee in reference to Bill 5005  
Appeal to Continue Music Haven Funding

February 10, 2020

I was alarmed to hear today that Music Haven has been cut from the state budget. I am writing to request that the Appropriations Committee reconsider, and continue to fund Music Haven for this year and going forward.

My husband and I make videos for nonprofits. Through our work, we have gotten intimate, behind-the-scenes glimpses of dozens of organizations in Connecticut. **I say without hesitation that Music Haven is my favorite.** The impact of the organization is real and substantial. All the testimonials – about the family atmosphere, the quality of the music education, the stellar teachers, the opportunities for personal growth, the engagement with the wider community, the racial and socio-economic diversity of the students, the mentorship, the fact that families (not just the students themselves) are engaged, the commitment to social change, equity, and inclusion – it's all true.

**When Music Haven boasts of the impact of the organization, there's no spin.** The teachers and the management team are superb: a really, really special group of people doing truly wonderful things.

Music Haven does everything it says it does, to an excellent level – we simply need to support so that Music Haven can continue the brilliant work.

**Music Haven has shown me the best examples I've ever seen of how to unify people, promote kindness and empathy, and break down stereotypes. We need this. The state should be increasing funding to such an effective organization – not cut it entirely.**

I anxiously await your decision and hope for good news. Please contact me with questions or if I can provide any further information.

Best wishes,  
Leah Russell

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