



TESTIMONY OF NANCY W. GENTES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MADONNA PLACE

REGARDING HB5055: DCF/DSS: AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2021.- Increasing support for Nonprofits

Madonna Place is a nonprofit agency providing family support, home visiting, parenting education, early childhood, fatherhood and child abuse prevention services in Eastern Connecticut. Approximately 2000 parents and children benefit annually. About 70% of our funding comes from the State of Connecticut and over the past 7 years we have lost about 650,000 in grant funding from the State resulting in significant loss of services to families in our communities. These losses include complete program eliminations, program funding reductions and rescissions which result in lowering our permanent base funding rather than a one-year reduction.

We are not alone, as the landscape for State nonprofit funding in Connecticut has been rough and unpredictable, leading to difficulty for many nonprofits to maintain sustainable operations and create long range strategic plans for their agencies.

More recently, the State of Connecticut has experienced increased revenue and was able to generally avoid cuts to nonprofits in the FY20 budget and to include a large contribution to the Rainy-Day Fund. These actions are certainly to be commended. However, there are other considerations.

It is now time, for you, our Leadership, to take care of the community of parents, children and other persons served by the hundreds of high quality nonprofit agencies in Connecticut that have been neglected for years by the inability of the State to provide flat funding, or reasonable costs of living increases. There are thousands of people employed by nonprofit agencies who have not received raises and unfortunately the occasional COLA increases given by the State of 1% in the past do not even cover the cost of benefit increases experienced by the agencies, never mind provide enough for a rate increase. **The Governor's Mid Term Biennial Budget does not include a request for overall nonprofit increases.**

As the Appropriations committee, you could establish a five-year plan, beginning with FY 21 to restore the funding shortfalls that have occurred to nonprofits beginning in 2007, which is estimated to be 461 million. This would show a dedicated commitment and investment in the needs of the human services community and the people that they serve.

Thank you for your consideration and support of Madonna Place, and the thousands of children, families and other individuals in our State that are served daily by the nonprofit community.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Nancy W. Gentes'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nancy W. Gentes, R.N., M.S.

Executive Director