

Public Hearing on:
H.B. 5005 An Act Adjusting The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June 30, 2021

Good evening Representative Walker and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Susan Brosseau. I live and vote in Hebron. I am the Chief Financial Officer of Adelbrook Behavioral and Developmental Services. At Adelbrook, we provide schools and residential services for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder and other intellectual and developmental disabilities, among other services. We are based in Cromwell and serve individuals from throughout CT.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on H.B. 5005 An Act Adjusting The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June 30, 2021.

In my role as the CFO of Adelbrook, it is my responsibility to promote the financial stability of my organization so that we may meet our financial obligations when due, grow our programs when appropriate, and retain our valued staff. As CFO, I serve our mission first, but in my role I must focus on our financial health to fully support that mission. So my discussion today reflects my perspective as CFO and also as a CPA .

Adelbrook, like the other organizations you have heard from today, is a private sector organization. We are tax exempt because of the mission of our organization, but we are also a private sector employer supporting 675 employees (and voters). This distinction gets lost sometimes when we refer to ourselves as community nonprofits, as if the nonprofit label somehow indicates there is a difference in how we pay our staff, maintain our buildings, and plan for our future, as compared to other businesses. As a private sector employer, we are subject to all of the influences and pressures that exist in the modern private sector economy. Our health care costs go up each year. Qualified staff leave for higher paying jobs in other industries, or for similar but higher paying jobs with public sector programs. Technology requires frequent updates. However, in spite of these and other financial challenges, we continue to serve the most at risk and vulnerable individuals in our state, and we do it with

efficiency and flexibility. Flat funding is a funding cut. That is how the math works.

The reason I am emphasizing our private sector status is that our payments from the state do not reflect this reality. When we use the word “funding” to describe our payments from the state, it implies that the exchange transaction (payment received from the state in exchange for services provided by Adelbrook) is somehow not the same type of payment that the state gives other providers of services, such as to businesses that pave our roads, cut our trees, and other private sector businesses. The organizations speaking tonight simply need to be paid for our services in the amounts that reflect the economic realities of how we must provide our services and pay our bills, in the same manner as any other private sector business.

I am here to respectfully **request that the legislature appropriate \$461 million over five years for these organizations.** Since 2007, we have lost at least \$461 million in funding from the state that has not kept pace with inflation or adequately covered increased costs and demand for services over the last thirteen years. Please:

1. Commit to increasing funding by the full \$461 million, or 28%, by Fiscal Year 2025;
2. Appropriate \$128 million (a state net of \$67 million after federal reimbursement) in new funding for community nonprofits in Fiscal Year 2021, a 7% increase;
3. Index increases to inflation, to ensure that state funding will keep pace with increased costs in the future.