



***Health Public Hearing on Friday February 21, 2019 regarding:***

***H.B. 5005: An Act Adjusting the State Budget for The Biennium Ending June 30, 2021***

***Testimony of Annette Hargrove, Interim President/CEO of Harc, Inc.***

February 19, 2020

Dear Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Formica, Representative Lavielle and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

I am Annette Hargrove, the Interim President/CEO for Harc Inc., a community service provider that supports over 1000 individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families in the Greater Hartford Region.

*Thank you for the opportunity to testify on H.B. 5005 An Act Adjusting The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June 30, 2021, I support appropriating an additional \$461 million over 5 years to community services.*

Our organization is a DDS provider who supports individuals with intellectual disabilities we work toward dignity and inclusion for all that come to us from Birth to Retirement.

**Why now,**

To empower you to be the hero in the eyes of individuals who are just asking for inclusion, dignity, and to just live their best life. For you today to be the difference in their lives!

Why pose,

The right to a dignified employment opportunity that includes a continuum of employment services.

Despite all the progress made over the past 68 years, one area that defies real progress is finding dignified, fulfilling work with predictable hours and competitive wages for people with disabilities. According to the Bureau of Labor statistics, *over 65% of the people with intellectual disabilities who want a job cannot obtain one.*

**Why important,**

State and Federal trends are moving to competitive employment for individuals with intellectual disabilities. In order to build a sustainable workforce we must have enough resources to:



Attract, hire and retain staff well versed in job creation for people with disabilities

Create meaningful training opportunities to teach real job skills to obtain real jobs

Hire and retain staff that will support people in competitive employment in the community

Purchase and maintain state of the art equipment, technology, transportation and materials to assist participants in obtaining and maintaining meaningful employment

### **Why Harc,**

Harc is the voice, the one who advocates for inclusion, the one who shouts the loudest to all that will listen, the one who hands John, David, Alice and Sue their payroll checks on Friday. The one who knows the dignity that comes with that check, the one who lives the difference every day, the one who is empowering you to be the difference.

*Community nonprofits provide essential services in every city and town in Connecticut, serving people in need and employing tens of thousands. They are what make Connecticut a great place to live and work.*

*I respectfully **request that the legislature appropriate \$461 million over five years for community nonprofits.** Since 2007, community nonprofits have lost at least \$461 million in state funding 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.*

*In regards to the DDS/DSS budgets:*

- Please support the Governor's proposal in the DSS and DDS budgets to create an incentive payment model to help move people with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities into less intensive and more appropriate levels of care.
  - Please ensure that this new program furthers the creation of a better continuum of care that provides the proper services for everyone who is eligible for them.
  - Please also do not just use the savings it creates to balance the budget, instead taking the opportunity to reinvest that savings into increasing rates and/or moving people off the waiting list.
- Please oppose the Governor's proposal to cut \$2 million from the Behavioral Support Program. The Governor's budget says that cut reflects "natural attrition." If that is the case, the funding should be reinvested to increase rates for those services.



**Why you,**

You have met challenges within the budget before and we are empowering you to rise up again. I leave you today with a quote from one amazing man at Harc who is has been employed through a program at Harc. "At Harc I have Blossomed"

Respectfully,

Annette Hargrove  
Interim President/CEO  
Harc, Inc.