



Appropriations Committee Talking Points

Public Hearing on:

[H.B. 5005](#) An Act Adjusting The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June 30, 2021

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

My name is Napali Bridgelall, and I work in the Quality Assurance department at Gilead Community Services. I support Gilead in providing services to over 600 clients in Middlesex County each year.

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

I am here to 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.

Every person in the state of Connecticut is affected by the availability of essential services provided by community nonprofits. These organizations help citizens in every city and town in Connecticut, and whether it's a loved one, friend, or ourselves, we all know someone whose livelihood relies on being able to access nonprofit services. For tens of thousands of people in Connecticut, these nonprofits are also a place to work and provide for themselves and their families.

In my two years working as an administrator at Gilead Community Services, I have seen the many negative effects of intense budget constraints due to lack of public funding. A history of budget cuts and chronic underfunding has resulted in a severe human capital deficiency within nonprofits. Agencies are forced to chase dollars through private or public grants and donations, which not only limit the ability of agencies to adapt, but are also accompanied by demanding reporting requirements that divert nonprofit employees from being able to focus on day-to-day duties. Employees at nonprofit agencies are often forced to take on responsibilities for multiple positions, which prevents us from growing the agency or focusing on new initiatives. It is often demoralizing and frustrating, and low agency budgets mean that our salaries do not compare to what we can make in a for-profit environment. This leads to high staff turnover, further forcing those who remain at the agency to take on more than they can handle.

I respectfully request that the legislature appropriate \$461 million over five years for community nonprofits, including increasing funding for behavioral health services and supporting Medicaid reimbursement rates that actually cover the cost of providing the service, so that nonprofit agencies can focus on providing care that is consistent, effective, and addressing the needs of those in our state that need it.