

Friends of Autistic People's written testimony in reference to *H.B. 5005 An Act Adjusting The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June 30, 2021*

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

My name is Brita Darany von Regensburg, I am Founder and President of Friends of Autistic People, FAP, a Greenwich CT based non profit advocacy organization and I am also mother of an adult non-verbal daughter with profound autism and I/DD

I wish to offer my written testimony regarding H.B. 5005 An Act Adjusting The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June 30, 2021. in both capacities; as an advocate on behalf of all adult profoundly autistic persons in the State, and also as a parent on behalf of my daughter who lives in a Resources for Human Development (RHD) group home in Trumbull.

I strongly oppose the \$1 million cut to Community Residential Services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We have thousands of people on the waiting lists for residential supports that the budget should be increased instead of cut . I oppose the recommended \$2 million cut to the Behavioral Services Program (BSP) even in stronger terms, if possible, and wish to propose to extend supports to families and individuals beyond the age of 8 to 21 with no upper age limit.

I also support the CT Community Nonprofits Alliance's 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.

I can speak from experience as I have seen how budget cuts have negatively impacted supports and services in group homes for adults. We need more funding to offer higher wages to staff to reduce turnover, attract staff with higher education and more experience, allow more one-on-one support when needed, offer autism therapies including OT behavioral and speech therapy and provide better transportation. We need better day programs that offer training, help find employment and offer job coaches etc. There are a myriad of unfilled needs that

all cry out for restoring lost funding and to find new monies to improve services and the quality of lives of all on the autism spectrum and with I/DD.

Institutions were closed with the mandate to allow their residents to live and participate in the lives of their communities. The proposed cut in the budget will achieve just the opposite. Group homes without appropriate budgets, adequate staffing and vans for transportation will just become "mini institutions" that are warehousing residents and will result in tremendous lowering their quality of life.

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