



February 10, 2021

Testimony in support of proposed H.B. No. 6119  
AN ACT CONCERNING ARTS, CULTURE AND TOURISM FUNDING

Dear members of the Commerce Committee,

I respectfully submit this testimony in support of H.B. No. 6119 from Neighborhood Music School in New Haven. NMS is the largest nonprofit community arts organization in the state and one of the 10 largest in the country. We offer music, dance, and drama instruction for 2,500 people annually from 80 cities and towns throughout Connecticut.

As our state moves forward through these incredibly challenging times, we must revitalize our economy and strengthen our communities. A thriving arts industry is critical to a strong economy, with profound effects on the tourism and hospitality sector, as well as employment of creative professionals and the personal well-being of Connecticut's residents. The changes proposed in this bill will support the efforts of our struggling arts institutions, and in turn, the health and well-being of our communities, now and in the future.

Since our world changed just about a year ago, the NMS community has let us know how important the arts are to them during these times of isolation. We are keeping people connected, and helping them find the joy that feeds their soul. We are currently running more than 100 hours of one-on-one music instruction per day, as well as maintaining essential childcare programs including our Preschool and ATLAS middle school. The arts are indeed essential in this moment, and they are vital as we move ahead.

The arts go far beyond personal benefits and community building. At NMS, we offer opportunities for everyone, providing critical touchpoints in creating a stable future for individuals and communities across the state. In addition to contributing to the economic vitality of our region, we focus on equity in education, we ensure youth have opportunities to develop critical life skills alongside compassionate mentors, and we connect a diverse and robust community under one roof. Our arts education prepares young students for college and career, supports seniors in aging creatively, and provides much-needed self-care and relief from the stresses of our current time.

The passage of H.B. 6119 will aid the arts sector in Connecticut, providing stability now and sustainability for the future.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Noah Bloom', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Noah Bloom  
Executive Director

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