

HB-06439 - Philip Boulanger Testimony in support of Music Haven

Dear Members of the Appropriations Committee,

As Education Director of Music Haven and Senior Resident Cellist of the Haven String Quartet, I have spent the last 8 years of my life devoted to Music Haven's mission of providing world-class music education to children and families who otherwise could never afford it. I have seen Music Haven grow from a tiny bootstraps organization that drove around New Haven in cars packed to the brim with tiny violins and cellos in order to reach our students, to a thriving, vibrant, active community of hundreds, congregating at or headquarters for lessons, group classes, chamber orchestra rehearsals, workshops, concerts, recitals, potlucks, guest artist visits, job training for parents, college counseling sessions, alumni panels, student-led discussion groups, and so much more.

Getting word last year that we'd finally be receiving line-item funding from the state for the work we do was an indescribable relief; it not only felt like validation and recognition for the tireless hours (and years) we have devoted to our students and their families, but the line-item amount would be an enormous portion of our operating budget; being able to devote even more energy to providing world-class programming for our students and families, rather than the never-ending grind of chasing funding, felt incredible.

Discovering that the state's promise was somehow a mistake, and that through some oversight or dropped ball we are in fact losing that funding, is devastating. I do hope that those of you with the power to right this wrong situation will do so. Music Haven needs you.

I encourage you to come any day of the week to see what your support means, to come step into our Music Haven home: hear the hubbub of young, eager musicians unpacking before their lessons, see children huddled around a chess board or playing a round of Uno waiting for a group class to start, catch a parent in the corner talking with a staff member about a job prospect, smell the fresh orange and apple peels left over from snack time, hear the music seeping through each wall, and know you've been a part of this incredible program.

Sincerely,

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