

Chair Walker & members of the Appropriations Committee —

I am a longtime resident of Darien & Stonington, and a fan and supporter of Music Haven, a 501c3 organization based in New Haven which provides FREE instruction in chamber music (violin, viola, cello) to school-age students from underserved communities, and provides concerts of chamber music to the public. The lessons, and the rhythms of learning/practice/rehearsal/performance these students learn in their Music Haven experience are not just a valuable skill and an art that would otherwise not be available to these young students, but are valuable experiences of community, responsibility, partnership, and contribution. Students who rarely have the challenge of working one-on-one with an instructor, or the responsibilities of a mentoring experience, of rehearsing and playing in a small ensemble in which every member has to appear on time, listen to fellow musicians and instructors, cooperate on a common task, play up to the required level, and be responsible for their part — learn these valuable life experiences thru Music Haven!

Music Haven campaigned hard and effectively for state funding, and the success of their campaign was announced in the press (<https://www.newhavenarts.org/arts-paper/articles/arts-army-rallies-to-keep-music-haven-in-state-budget>). It now appears that the Appropriations Committee "forgot" to include that funding in the state budget, which threatens the existence of this valuable organization and the programs they provide.

I'm writing to urge a reconsideration and correction of this oversight. Music Haven and their students and audiences deserve state support. Thank you for your consideration of these comments,

- Ronald Florence

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