

Dear Chair Walker, Chair Osten, Ranking Member Miner, Ranking Member France, Vice Chair Dathan, Vice Chair Nolan, Vice Chair Hartley, and Members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Scott Gigante. I am a resident of New Haven, I am testifying to communicate my strong support for the reintroduction of \$100,000 in funding for Music Haven in Connecticut HB 06439, *An Act Concerning The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June Thirtieth, 2023, And Making Appropriations Therefor*.

Music Haven provides an irreplaceable service to its students. As a nonprofit serving New Haven's underserved neighborhoods, the educational experience, personal support, and community provided to the students at Music Haven, who are overwhelmingly students from low-income families and families of color, is an exceptional addition to these students' lives and to the New Haven community.

The benefits of Music Haven's activities go beyond music tuition. Graduates of the Music Haven program have a 100% matriculation rate to four-year colleges, an outstanding result especially considering the chronically underfunded nature of public education in Greater New Haven. Additionally, the students at Music Haven benefit from help with organizational skills, mentorship, and inclusion in a community which gives these students structure and consistency which they may otherwise lack.

As you know, Music Haven's prior grant from the state budget accounted for approximately 20% of its budget; as you may also know, [Chair Walker committed in February](#) to return this funding to the budget; and despite this commitment, the funding continues to be absent. Funding Music Haven is more than just funding a music program – it is funding life-changing opportunities for New Haven's young people living in low-income communities of color.

I strongly support the reintroduction of funding for Music Haven into HB 06439 and urge you to favorably vote for such an amendment.

Sincerely,

Scott Gigante
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