

February 18, 2021

Appropriations Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 2700
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Representative Toni Walker, Senator Catherine Osten, and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

Re: Testimony for Hearing of February 19, 2021, Music Haven, **HB - 06439**

I am Marc Mann, the Board Chair of Music Haven. A year ago, supporters of Music Haven testified before your Committee and were assured that the omission of funding of \$100,000 for FY 2021-2022 was a mistake and would be restored. Music Haven was greatly buoyed by your pledge of support. This week we were shocked to learn that this year's proposed budget still lacks funding for Music Haven.

When the pandemic closed schools last March, Music Haven sprang into action within days, assuring that all its students had internet access, computers, and on-line musical instruction. With food insecurity looming, we provided donated grocery cards for those in need. We partnered with other leading nonprofits in our community to develop a robust response to the pandemic.

In the past year Music Haven extended its lessons into the summer, increased the contact days to 4 days/ child / week, and expanded its teaching to include composition, improvisation, and mastery of electronic music editing software. The results are astounding – outstanding progress in musicianship, self-confidence, and resilience; full retention of students; and consistent engagement across all age groups! Many of our students have credited their music and Music Haven for providing the inspiration, calmness and focus they needed to navigate the isolation and chaos of the pandemic.

Music Haven has promised to provide high quality musical instruction and mentorship to young people who would not otherwise have such access and pledged to stick with them until they go to college. **We are counting on you to keep your promise to restore State funding for Music Haven for this year, and for the future, so that we can keep the promise that we made to these students and their families.** We trust you will not disappoint them. Thank you!

Respectfully,

Marc E. Mann, MD
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