

02-18-2021

To Whom it May Concern

re: Bill No. HB-06439

My name is Wendy Marans, I am Past Board Chair and current Board Member of Music Haven, and I am submitting testimony to have this extraordinary organization reinstated in the current budget, following an apparently erroneous omission this year.

I have been involved with Music Haven for 9 years during which time it has gone from strength to strength in its provision of an opportunity, a space, and a community where our students receive long term and completely free classical music tuition, instruments, and mentoring from outstanding musicians and teachers, with the goal of building community and developing skills that will serve them in their academic and future life experiences. More recent additions to the curriculum include improvisation and music technology, culturally responsive music history classes and a college pathways program.

From the first day of the Covid-19 shutdown, March 16, 2020, Mandi Jackson and the Music Haven team worked to ensure that all of our students had Chromebooks or laptops, access to working WiFi in their homes, and information for them and their families about local and state resources that were available to help them. The teachers moved online using a range of platforms and in less than two weeks had student lessons, and group classes up and running. More than 80% of our students have continued with us, sending in practice tapes, playing together remotely, and having opportunities for supervised, virtual "hangouts" with their friends, learning new skills through necessity and skilled guidance. Many of them report that Music Haven is the one thing they look forward to and feel good about, the place they want to come to see friends and teachers. Locally, it has been seen as one of the not-for-profits who have managed to do it right. It has taken hours of dedication, work, love and commitment from staff, board, students and the community, who recognize it as being an organization to be proud of and to support. I hope that the State recognizes this too, and immediately votes to reinstate Music Haven as a budget recipient as was intended. Our students and their families deserve this investment.

Please see the attached link to a story with assurances from Committee Chair Toni Walker that this error will be fixed:

[/https://www.newhavenarts.org/arts-paper/articles/arts-army-rallies-to-keep-music-haven-in-state-budget](https://www.newhavenarts.org/arts-paper/articles/arts-army-rallies-to-keep-music-haven-in-state-budget)

Thank you.

Wendy D. Marans
88 Russell Street
Hamden CT. 06517