

**March 1, 2021**  
**Appropriations Committee**

The honorable members of the Appropriations Committee,

I am writing to comment on H.B. 6439 An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 13, 2023.

My name is Daniel Brill, President of the Board of Directors at SARAH Inc. Our non-profit agency has a long history of supporting individuals with disabilities and we provide a myriad of services including Birth to Three Early Intervention, Employment, Day Support, and Community Supports. In a year, our agency serves approximately 1400 children and individuals throughout 50 towns in Connecticut.

I respectfully **request that the legislature appropriate \$461 million over five years for community nonprofits**. Over the past 14 years community non-profits have lost at least that much in state funding because service rates have not kept pace with inflation or covered increased costs and demand for services. While we are a well-run business there is little to no room left to streamline our services. The rising cost of business without matching rate increases is causing lasting negative impacts on our agency.

I respectfully ask you to:

- Commit to increasing funding by the full \$461 million, or 28%, by Fiscal Year 2026;
  - Appropriate \$128 million (a state net of \$67 million after federal reimbursement) in new funding for community nonprofits in Fiscal Year 2022, a 7% increase
  - Index increases to inflation, to ensure that state funding will keep pace with increased costs in the future.
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- Hold nonprofits financially harmless from the impact of COVID-19.

Our KIDSTEPS program meets the developmental needs of children ages 0-3 who have disabilities or delays. We are there for every step of the process with the families from evaluations to transitioning into the school system. Our program is built around the belief that a parent is a child's best advocate and we aim to give parents all the tools they need to best help their children.

Due to years of underfunding, especially this year throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the KIDSTEPS program had to invest heavily into our own infrastructure just to be able to continue providing services, without help from the state. One recent example is needing to switch to a

virtual service model with updated technology in a matter of days just to ensure that children and families still received necessary services while keeping everyone safe!

In H.B. 6439, we ask that you please support the proposed \$1 million increase in Birth to Three services for FY23. Every year we see an increase in number of children who needs Birth to Three supports. It is more important now than ever before to guarantee a funding increase to match the needs of all community non-profits. All funding invested back into Birth to Three programs will make a difference to hundreds of families.

Thank you for your consideration related to passing H.B. 6439.

Sincerely,

Dan Brill  
President of SARAH Inc. Board of Directors  
SARAH Inc.  
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