

***Robert J. Cloonan
333 Cumberland Road
West Hartford, CT 06119***

Re: H.B. No. 6439 An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2023.

Submitted By: Bob Cloonan 333 Cumberland Road West Hartford, CT 06119

March 2, 2021

Thank goodness most have no idea what it is like to be a young family newly transferred to a new location halfway across the country, bringing their new 6 week old baby for his first visit to his new Doctor and being asked: "Do you know that he is blind?" Added to this is the pain of finding out that he probably has intellectual disabilities and is also deaf - all caused by rubella. Worse yet is to find out several years later that his younger sister has a serious incurable genetic disorder that will also require a lifetime of special care. It certainly results in a change in one's priorities. It also ensures that the parents will provide unrelenting advocacy for every single person who has any type of disability.

Along with this fight for the best possible life for our children we have learned that there are some special families who are willing to stand by us every step of the way - 24 hours a day. This means the Oak Hill, Harc and Keystone Human Services family of staff and health care workers. During 50+ years of daily challenges they have always been with us sharing their dedication, devotion and love. And perhaps their toughest battle has been during this recent Pandemic. In our minds each of them deserves a Medal of Honor and Appreciation.

But we can also recognize them in another way that is more appropriate. The day to day workers in these families have not received adequate wage adjustments in 14 years because there have been no rate allocations provided in your final state budgets.

This certainly does not reflect the consideration, respect and support that health care workers in our non-profit community deserve. Fourteen years! Nothing in the budget.

Please make provisions in the current budget that our Governor has neglected to include for adequate funding over the next 5 years for our families who care for those with disabilities.

The time line for avoiding this commitment has expired.

Respectively submitted,

Bob Cloonan, West Hartford