

**Public Hearing on:**  
**H.B. 6439 An Act Concerning The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June Thirtieth, 2023,**  
**And Making Appropriations Therefor.**  
**Health Subcommittee**  
**Tuesday, March 2, 10:00 am**

Good afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Miner, Representative France and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

**My name is Maria Edson and I am a Program Manager for SARAH Inc.**

I AM WRITING TO COMMENT ON H.B. 6439 An Act Concerning The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June Thirtieth, 2023, And Making Appropriations Therefor.

Community nonprofits provide essential services in every city and town in Connecticut, serving people in need and employing tens of thousands. They are what make Connecticut a great place to live and work.

I am here to respectfully **request that the legislature appropriate \$461 million over five years for community nonprofits**. Since 2007, community nonprofits have lost at least \$461 million in state funding that has not kept pace with inflation or adequately covered increased costs and demand for services over the last thirteen years. Please:

1. Commit to increasing funding by the full \$461 million, or 28%, by Fiscal Year 2026;
2. 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;
3. Index increases to inflation, to ensure that state funding will keep pace with increased costs in the future.
4. Hold nonprofits financially harmless from the impact of COVID-19.

**The Covid-19 pandemic has put us in the position of developing unprecedented virtual programming on a moment's notice and having to develop ways to keep individuals and families engaged, while they still may not be comfortable with in-person services one year after the start of the pandemic. Technology was made available to all individuals who required it for participation in virtual services. Day programs returned to in-person services in July of 2020, while DDS continued to work remotely from home. Day programs have been doing double-duty by continuing to provide both in-person and virtual programming to accommodate the needs of all people served. Day programs developed safety protocols and procedures to ensure we were doing everything in our power to keep individuals and staff safe during the months we have been in-person. The PPE needed for staff and individuals, as well as the increased need for disinfecting supplies have stretched budgets that were already limited. Staff have had to figure out how to care for their own children who are in remote learning, while still being able to work. The day programs have had to accommodate supporting these staff during this difficult time and account**

**for staff who have had to quarantine, while still needing to ensure the needs of program and ratios can be met.**

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the impact of inadequate funding for nonprofit services and brought unanticipated and unbudgeted costs and operational challenges for many community nonprofits, such as:

- Providing hazard pay for essential workers on the front lines with a higher risk of exposure;
- Procuring expensive and hard to find Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies;
- Creating telehealth services seemingly overnight, and purchasing necessary computers, cybersecurity, online meeting platforms and training for both staff and people receiving services.
- Many community nonprofits never closed their doors even as the pandemic worsened.