



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

I am Pam Fields CEO at MidState Arc. Our Agency supports 300 people with intellectual disabilities throughout central CT to live fully integrated in their communities in employment, housing, volunteering, recreation and retirement with a specialty in utilizing Assistive Technology for successful moves to greater independence .

I will be testifying on H.B. 6439 An Act Concerning The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June 30, 2023, And Making Appropriations Therefore.

I am part of an essential network of human service agencies providing vital services in every city and town in Connecticut as we support Connecticut's most vulnerable citizens and employ tens of thousands of Connecticut's citizens.

I am here to implore **the legislature to appropriate 461 million dollars 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. And please hold nonprofits financially harmless from the impact of COVID-19.

During the pandemic MidState along with many other service agencies have struggled to keep the people we support and their staff safe. We have invested hundreds of thousands on new technology and equipment to meet these new safety standards; along with hundreds of thousands of dollars to provide hazard pay and overtime. We have supported our families and staff as they have lost loved ones during this

time...and are now dealing with extreme staff shortages and a hiring black hole that is failing to produce new candidates.

Our Direct Support Professional Staff has provided supports during this time at risk to themselves and their families' health and safety and doing so for very low compensation. MidState Arc never closed our doors. Our Staff have worked long hours, endured difficult situations including wearing PPE equipment for extended periods of time; being directly exposed to Covid day after day and watching the people they support die. They have been asked and sometimes mandated to go against their religious beliefs to shave their faces and receive vaccines. These are the real heroes during this pandemic.

We employ a young work force who has been asked to do a lot for a little....how long do we expect them to do that...and remember when you raise the minimum wage and fail to raise the Direct Support Professional's salaries you are pushing them to an easier and safer job at Walmart and McDonalds....when this happens who will be left to care for CT's most vulnerable citizens....we must STOP sending the message that widgets and burgers are much more important than people.

I implore you to reinvest the proposed savings of \$4.1 million dollars as we transition 300 people from Group services to individualized services; the \$2.3 Million from funding reductions in behavioral services; and the \$1 million in each fiscal year from closing public CLA's.

Please support the safety net that provides the care for Connecticut's most vulnerable citizens.

Thank you for hearing my testimony....stay healthy and safe!

Pamela Fields
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