

To: Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Miner, Representative France and members of the Appropriations Committee.

Re: Concerns regarding [H.B. 6439](#) AAC The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June Thirtieth, 2023, And Making Appropriations Therefor

Date: March 1, 2021

I am writing today with concerns about the proposed H.B 6439 and the need for additional funding to support human service providers who serve people with disabilities throughout the state.

First, and perhaps foremost, I am the parent of an adult man with autism who lives in a group home and attends a day program operated by Marrakech, Inc. I am concerned for his well-being when the organization who operates his group home is so severely underfunded.

Second, my own organization, Milestones Behavioral Services has been a DDS funded provider for approximately 10 years. We are now permanently closing our doors due to the lack of funding and our inability to continue to provide quality care to those we serve without losing buckets of money every year. What was once difficult is now just impossible to sustain. We are not the only program who has had to close or cut back services due to lack of funding, and I doubt we will be the last. I just attended a DDS meeting today where the presenter provided survey data indicating that more than 80% of human service providers fear they will not be able to keep their doors open much longer.

Third, I am a volunteer member of the Board for Marrakech, Inc. for close to 20 years. During that time I have seen the impact of the state not providing them with a Cost of Living Increase year after year.

I do appreciate the co-chairs public support of funding the nonprofits fairly to make up for the 14 years of no COLA, and to commit to funding increases on a regular basis. I hope that this is supported by everyone on the appropriations and every legislator in CT.

I also strongly support **the 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.

Yours truly,

Suzanne Letso, M.A., BCBA. LBA (CT, NY & MA)
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