

Sunday February 28, 2021

Good afternoon distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Madjiadoum Mabaye and I live in Waterbury and work for STAR Inc, in Norwalk, CT.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on H.B. 6439 An Act Concerning the State Budget for The Biennium Ending June 2023.

Community nonprofits like STAR 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.

I have been working for STAR for 6 years and love the work I do. I help people who are the most vulnerable to be safe, have choices, participate in day and residential programs. I want to continue to do this important work, but I also need a living wage to raise my own family. The starting wage for direct support staff is \$14.75. The work a direct support staff does holds a great deal of responsibility for keeping very vulnerable people safe and this has only increased as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Please increase funding to the non-profit agencies so that this important work can continue.

Thank you.

Madjiadoum Mabaye