

**Public Hearing on:**  
**H.B. 6439 An Act Concerning The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June Thirtieth, 2023,  
And Making Appropriations Therefor.**  
**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 Heather Marquis and I am writing/speaking to you on behalf of my organization, Goodwill of Western and Northern CT.

Our locally incorporated and independently-run Goodwill has had the privilege of providing community-based services to residents of 104 Connecticut Towns through a variety of state agencies. We serve individuals who have survived brain injuries, individuals who struggle with mental health challenges, the under employed and individuals with intellectual and developmental diagnoses. Goodwill's community impact extends to over 13,000 Connecticut residents. In the last year alone GWNC helped 4,255 with employment in our self-funded career centers. We are among the 550+ member agencies of the CT Community Nonprofit Alliance (CT Nonprofit Alliance.)

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on H.B. 6439 An Act Concerning The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June Thirtieth, 2023, And Making Appropriations Therefor.

As this committee is well aware of, nonprofits have spent the last decade doing more with less while desperately trying to preserve a safety net for our state's most vulnerable residents. We have partnered with state agencies to navigate past budget crisis and most recently endured our largest battle to date with COVID. We have done all of this willingly and never more devoted to our mission. In this adversity we have seen the most inspiring heroic efforts from our employees on the front lines and those supporting them. There have been sleepless nights of worry and long shifts always with the same goal, protecting and supporting those we serve.

We must acknowledge that we are grateful for the support of our state agencies, in particular this past year DDS and DMHAS has provided the funding needed to help us preserve the continuity of services and allow us to keep our program staff employed.

Today though we are here to talk about opportunity. The opportunity that this committee has to make a difference with the newfound availability of funding. It's time to invest in nonprofits and the services we provide. We are asking you to invest in a sure bet. You know how much we can do with so little, imagine what we could do with a bit more. By funding these services, we could expand the quality of safety net and preserve the field of human services. Specifically nonprofits would finally be able to robustly promote staff morale, expand training, enable better use of technology and invest in data analytics to further outcomes and quality of services to the Connecticut residents that we serve.

So here is the ask, we 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.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to ask any questions.