

Appropriations Committee

Public Hearing on:

[H.B. 6439](#)

An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June Thirtieth, 2023, And Making Appropriations Therefor.

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

My name is Chris McNaboe, CEO of Horizons, one of the private nonprofit agencies providing essential services statewide to our citizens with developmental disabilities for over 40 years. 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.

Our agency supports over 1700 people annually where they live, work, learn and play. Our staff are among the 117,000 professional staff that make up 12% of Connecticut's work force. 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:

*Commit to increasing funding by the full \$461 million, or 28%, by Fiscal Year 2026;

*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.

*Index increases to inflation, to ensure that state funding will keep pace with increased costs.

We receive at least 4-6 calls per week from families and individuals who would like our services. We have had a waiting list for years from people waiting to get funding from DDS for services. We cannot expand to serve these folks because we have a staffing crisis due to the low wages we are forced to pay due to painfully **low rates we receive**.

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. We never closed our doors and that came at great risk to our staff and people we support. But we pressed on with the hope of being finally able to be recognized as essential. We need to pay our staff a living wage. **Many of our staff are on Husky insurance, receive energy assistance and food stamps because in spite of working full time they still cannot afford the basics. That must end!**

I cannot fundraise for their wages- we need **your** help.