

**TESTIMONY OF Danielle Blackstone**

**Appropriations Committee**

**March 3, 2021**

Good Afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Danielle Blackstone, I live in East Haven, and I am the Finance and Administrative Manager at The Diaper Bank of Connecticut, which serves families throughout the state. Thank you for the opportunity to write to you this regarding my support for restoring funding for The Diaper Bank of Connecticut, which will allow the organization to continue the critical work of providing basic human needs to Connecticut's most vulnerable families.

Prior to the onset of the pandemic, diaper need impacted over 35,000 infants and toddlers in our state. The state's allocation of \$333,333 equates to the cost of a supplemental supply of diapers covering 7% of the need that existed in our state. We know the need for diapers has only grown since then and we need support to continue to meet it.

As a supporter of The Diaper Bank of Connecticut, I know that diapers are a basic human need for every baby and toddler. Diapers are vital to the physical, emotional, and economic well-being of children and their families. Prior to the pandemic, one in three Connecticut families struggled to afford an adequate supply of diapers; *now the need is at an all-time high.*

With restored funding, The Diaper Bank will be able to continue to provide diapers to Connecticut's most vulnerable at a time when they are critically needed to individuals who are low income or financially struggling.

Accessibility and resources for community partners are essential to our communities success. The cuts may seem small in scale but make life changing impacts. In supporting the diaper bank we are helping working families not have to choose between food and diapers. The health risks associated with infections caused by soiled diapers are not only costly but put the health of the child at risk. Without clean diapers families can not send their children to daycare facilities, which in turn perpetuates the issues at hand.

It is important to note that The Diaper Bank of Connecticut strives to connect families with access to basic needs across the state. It is a network that not only helps redirect families in need of diapers but also aligns these families with our partners who work within their direct community that provide other basic needs. We have received calls from children out-of-state hoping to provide the incontinence products for their parents and with our network we are able to make these connections for families struggling with travel restrictions, health and the financial hardships that we have all faced over the course of the pandemic.

Diapers, period products, and senior incontinence products are basic human needs that are required for the health and well-being of families. I urge the members of the Appropriations Committee to support restoring state funding for The Diaper Bank of Connecticut because all Connecticut families deserve access to these basic human needs.

Sincerely,

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