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March 5, 2021

Dear Chair Osten, Chair Walker,
and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

Thank you for your continued service and dedication to our state during this pandemic. As organizations and businesses working to build strong foundations for all children and families, we ask that you maintain your commitment to addressing diaper need in our state, particularly as this public issue has risen to unprecedented levels during the COVID-19 crisis. We ask that you hold constant the current level of funding for The Diaper Bank of Connecticut, if not increase funding at this precarious time. The pandemic has forced more Connecticut children and families to turn to The Diaper Bank than ever before to access the material basic necessities they need to survive and ultimately thrive. Continued investment is needed to support families in overcoming this crisis and to help revitalize our economy.

Even prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, one in three families struggled to afford enough diapers to keep their child clean, dry, and healthy. Without enough diapers each day, infants and toddlers are at risk of skin infections, open sores, urinary tract infections, and other conditions that may require medical attention. Parents unable to diaper their children are more likely to suffer from parental depression. Now due to the pandemic, record levels of unemployment combined with cuts in paid hours for workers across almost every economic sector in the country have led to an extraordinary strain on the philanthropic community.

Nearly a year into the pandemic and The Diaper Bank of Connecticut has seen a significant increase in the numbers of diapers distributed. Philanthropy alone cannot sustain this level of demand for resources. The current state funding has been critical in helping to meet at least a portion of the increased need. Unfortunately, it cannot meet all of the need, and Governor Lamont's proposed cuts to this funding would mean that our neighbors, friends and families will not receive the diapers that their children need.

As the coronavirus vaccination rates increase and we look towards economic recovery, diapers are a crucial necessity for parents to return to work and support their families. Nearly all child care facilities require a weekly supply of disposable diapers. For parents forced into unemployment for months, this cost of providing diapers could create an insurmountable barrier to returning to work. Investing in families now will enable us to come through the remaining months of the pandemic stronger and bounce back faster.

Thank you for your support of our ongoing work. We ask that you ensure that all children and families living in Connecticut receive the basic necessities they require and we hope we can count on you to maintain current levels of funding for The Diaper Bank of Connecticut.

Sincerely,

National Diaper Bank Network