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Testimony Submitted to the Human Services Committee

In Support of:

**Raised S.B. 413: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A COMMUNITY PROVIDER
RESCUE FUND
ACCOUNT AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES COMMISSION**

Submitted By: James Morrison, Senior Vice President
MARC: Community Resources

Public Hearing Date: February 26, 2008

To Senator Harris, Representative Villano and members of the Human Services Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony regarding this important legislative initiative.

We are a non-profit agency providing services to individuals under contract with DDS in the greater Middletown area. We currently operate several licensed CLA's, support individuals living in their own homes, and provide a full array of vocational and leisure services. We serve over 2 hundred consumers and their families and employ over 100 staff in greater Middlesex County. We are among the 500+ member agencies of the Connecticut Association of Nonprofits (CT Nonprofits.)

I am writing in **support** of Raised S.B. 413: An Act Establishing a Community Provider Rescue Fund Account and Community-Based Services Commission.

As you are aware, the Governor's midterm budget does not include any cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA) funding for FY09. The 3% COLA received in SFY08 would not have occurred without the generous support and continued efforts of members of the Human Services Committee. Your consideration of a COLA in FY09 is greatly appreciated. You have heard testimony through the years, from countless entities, seeking to alter the direction of historic under-funding of the nonprofit provider community. The concepts in the proposed legislation provide an opportunity to begin to address these issues in both a short term, and even more importantly - long range manner. The Nonprofit Provider Community joins together before you to request COLA funding for all state-funded Purchase of Service contracts in the amount of 9%. SB 413 Section 4 calls for an appropriation of \$135 million into the Rescue Fund, which is equivalent to a 9% COLA.

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Our projections for next year indicate that should the governor's current budget be adopted with no COLA, even if we utilize every dollar of grants, fund raising and income from sources other than DDS, we will still run a \$75,000 plus deficit. This would entail eliminating all of our adult and child recreation programs affecting well over 200 consumers and their families, as well as staff lay-offs and not filling vacant positions. In a word, it would be disastrous for this agency and the individuals and families we serve.

Last year's 3% COLA was very much appreciated and assisted in warding off this disaster, however, it was meant to be just a beginning. Our staff, and the families who place their trust in us, deserve to know that we will be able to provide the same high quality of service in the future that we do now. Unless significant steps are taken to address our chronic under funding issues in a significant and long term manner, we can make no such assurances.

Please, I urge you, once again to

***Support Passage of S.B. 413:
Establishing a Community Provider Rescue Fund Account and
Community-Based Services Commission.***

I would also encourage you to contact providers within your local communities. The ability of the state to adequately meet the needs of its residents is greatly dependent upon the ability of the Nonprofit Provider Community to sustain a vibrant network, which will continue to serve as the ultimate safety net for Connecticut's citizens at risk.

I thank you for your time and consideration of these critically important issues.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions, or for additional information:

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