

**Written Testimony of
Patrick Danis, Program Coordinator
Epilepsy Foundation of Connecticut, Inc.
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Appropriations Committee**

Good evening Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Patrick Danis and I am the Program Coordinator for the Epilepsy Foundation of Connecticut. I am here today on behalf of Linda Wallace, Executive Director, the Foundation's Board of Directors and the 60,000 people in Connecticut who have epilepsy, to urge you to reinstate the Foundation's funding of \$25,000. This amount was restored by the Governor last year after the original amount of \$55,000 was removed from the budget. .

As you know, epilepsy is a chronic condition that affects approximately 60,000 people in our state. It is not just a condition of childhood but can afflict individuals of all ages and all income levels. If the individual is a child, there is an increased risk compared to other children of compromised social and intellectual development. Identifying learning difficulties and addressing emotional and social problems soon after a diagnosis is critical to future development. An adult who is diagnosed with epilepsy for the first time can experience significant lifestyle limitations, such as driving, loss of income and strained family relationships.

The funding we receive from the state is used to improve the quality of life for people with epilepsy by providing them with reliable information, ongoing support, and identifying appropriate services and professionals who can assist them. It is also used to conduct community education and create awareness among teachers, nurses, first responders, and other groups who interact with people who have epilepsy on a daily basis. Last year we responded to hundreds of requests for information, conducted over 50 educational programs for teachers, nurses, and allied health personnel, sponsored support groups throughout the state, and offered a summer camp experience for 35 children and teens with epilepsy. We believe all of those services are vital to improving the quality of life for people with epilepsy.

In these difficult economic times, the Epilepsy Foundation of Connecticut understands the need to exercise fiscal restraint, but feel that we have already assumed a \$30,000 cut. We are only asking for a fraction of the total cost to provide a myriad of services. And although epilepsy is one of the most common neurological disorders in the United States, we are the only agency in the state that specifically provides programs and services to those affected by the condition.

I appreciate this opportunity to testify on behalf of the thousands of people with epilepsy who live in our state, and hope that you will recognize the need to appropriate \$25,000 for epilepsy services in the next fiscal year budget.