

Presented to the Appropriation Committee on February 20, 2009

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Appropriation Committee...

My name is Carl Noll. I live in Fairfield. My wife and I have three sons, two of whom have special needs. Eric is a 43 year old man with autism. Robert a 39 year old man is vision impaired. Eric was educated in the Fairfield Public School system and is a client of the Kennedy Center Sheltered Workshop in Trumbull. Robert, who became blind when he was five years old was educated at the Connecticut Institute For the Blind - Oak Hill, where he is a permanent resident in one of Oak Hill's group homes.

My family and I are grateful to the generosity of the State of Connecticut for the funding and other support that has allowed both of these young men to become productive members of society.

I am here today to speak in support of the state's funding for these and other privately funded organizations, without which it is doubtful that my two sons and many others like them would have made the strides they have made and become positive contributors to their respective communities.

We, and thousands of parents and supporters such as we, applaud the action which Governor Rell took on her budget proposal to maintain funding to these non profit organizations at current levels.

We know, that it doesn't stop there. We know that there are hearings such as these and actions that the budget committee must take before the budget is finalized. We also are aware of the serious state that our economy is in. We also know that to continue funding these organizations at a zero increase is jeopardizing their very existence. The costs of running these

organizations is not decreasing. These organizations pare their budgets as best they can. Eventually, this impacts the services provided to these people, some of the most vulnerable people in our state. We, their supporters, their advocates cannot sit idly by, even in these economic times, and watch as these programs are eroded by the state's failure to increase budgeting to combat the effects of inflation on these organizations' expenses.

I want to remind you that these people are, as we all are, to quote Thomas Jefferson, who once so eloquently put it "endowed by Our Creator with certain unalienable rights that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness".

Please, through your actions, as individuals, and as a committee, see to it that these people continue to be able to exercise these rights.

Thank you for your precious time

Carl Noll
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