

To Senators and members of the Appropriations Committee:

In the past 2 weeks, I have come here and spoken representing the Connecticut Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf and today, for Rachel Spillane from FSW. Now I am speaking for myself, a Danbury resident and professional interpreter who is simply concerned about a devastating loss of services to friends.

I am here in opposition to SB 32 - An Act Implementing the Governor's Recommendations Concerning Social Services. The passage of this Act as it stands would mean the dissolution of the nation's first Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired and will severely negatively impact roughly 298,000 deaf and hard of hearing citizens of Connecticut.

CDHI is more than the interpreters that you see. Tangibly it is case management, advocacy, counseling, and education. Intangibly, it is comfort, camaraderie, and safety. Today several people have spoken about CDHI being a Deaf friendly space and you're probably thinking one of two things: what the heck is Deaf friendly, or, aren't people already friendly to Deaf folks? The friendly to deaf folks part, well, that's definitely not entirely true but that's another story.

The best way I know to explain what Deaf friendly means is to explain it as if you've traveled abroad. You're in a country where you don't really know the language. You may be getting by well enough, having a great time, meeting people, learning, having fun, but communication is hard at best. You have some basic phrases and words, but you're pretty limited and most communication is pretty frustrating. That pocket dictionary has become your new best friend. Then one afternoon you meet a group of Americans and you're finally able to tell stories and be around people who really understand what you're saying as well as many of the experiences you've had. If it's been long enough, you might even stay up all night telling stories. That feeling of relief, freedom and safety is what Deaf people feel when they are in a Deaf friendly place. CDHI is one of a very few places in the state that provide this, simply by having staff who are fluent in American Sign Language.

From a fiscal standpoint, taking into consideration that the interpreters are simply moving to another department, closing CDHI would only mean a budget savings of \$776, 777. This minor savings, however, will not be long-lasting. By eliminating the counseling and case management services, Deaf and Hard of Hearing people will have to access those resources by other means, through other state departments and through interpreters. CDHI has a finite number of interpreters and even now cannot cover all of the requests for services that come from the various state agencies and schools. Ultimately, the state departments and agencies that will be accessed by deaf and hard of hearing people needing counseling and case management will need to contract with outside agencies to provide interpreting services. Since these services are not free, the \$777,000 in savings will quickly prove penny wise and pound foolish. This will also place an undue burden on the service providers, especially those in private practice who will not be able to afford to provide interpreting services. Lawsuits are possible, increased usage of DMHAS and crisis services are probable, all requiring interpreting services. Ultimately this will most likely end up costing the state significantly more than the minor savings obtained with the current budget proposal.

Keeping CDHI as a stand-alone independent agency is beneficial to not only the deaf and hard of hearing community but to the state.

Respectfully submitted,



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PROPOSED APPROPRIATIONS

	2010-2011 Appropriated*	Net Adjustments	2010-2011 Revised Recommendations
Connecticut Mental Health Center	8,638,491	-1,372,770	7,265,721
Professional Services	9,688,898	2,100,000	11,788,898
General Assistance Managed Care	86,346,032	3,683,775	90,029,807
Workers' Compensation Claims	12,344,566		12,344,566
Nursing Home Screening	622,784		622,784
Young Adult Services	56,874,159		56,874,159
TBI Community Services	9,402,612		9,402,612
Jail Diversion	4,426,568		4,426,568
Behavioral Health Medications	8,869,095	-200,000	8,669,095
Prison Overcrowding	6,231,683		6,231,683
Medicaid Adult Rehabilitation Option	4,044,234	-80,885	3,963,349
Discharge and Diversion Services	3,080,116	5,882,000	8,962,116
Home and Community Based Services	4,625,558		4,625,558
Persistent Violent Felony Offenders Act	703,333		703,333
OTHER THAN PAYMENTS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS			
Grants for Substance Abuse Services	25,528,766	-251,000	25,277,766
Grants for Mental Health Services	76,394,230	-250,000	76,144,230
Employment Opportunities	10,630,353	-255,716	10,374,637
AGENCY TOTAL	623,472,330	-16,140,957	607,331,373
PSYCHIATRIC SECURITY REVIEW BOARD			
Personal Services	321,454	-5,168	316,286
Other Expenses	39,441	-1,972	37,469
Equipment	100	-99	1
AGENCY TOTAL	360,995	-7,239	353,756
TOTAL	1,737,449,349	-42,233,602	1,695,215,747
HEALTH AND HOSPITALS			
<u>HUMAN SERVICES</u>			
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES			
Personal Services	121,948,904	-11,852,553	110,096,351
Other Expenses	89,398,799	-2,111,207	87,287,592
Equipment	100	-99	1
Children's Trust Fund	13,673,147	-6,974,411	6,698,736
Children's Health Council	218,317		218,317
HUSKY Outreach	706,452	-706,452	
Genetic Tests In Paternity Actions	201,202	-10,060	191,142
State Food Stamp Supplement	511,357	305,000	816,357
Day Care Projects	478,820	-119,705	359,115
HUSKY Program	36,463,900	584,100	37,048,000
Charter Oak Health Plan	22,510,000	-2,910,000	19,600,000
Interpreters for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired		316,944	316,944
OTHER THAN PAYMENTS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS			
Vocational Rehabilitation	7,386,668		7,386,668
Medicaid	3,694,819,974	219,711,826	3,914,531,800
Lifestar Helicopter	1,388,190		1,388,190
Old Age Assistance	38,110,566	-3,155,000	34,955,566
Aid to the Blind	753,000	-24,000	729,000
Aid to the Disabled	62,720,424	-1,145,000	61,575,424
Temporary Assistance to Families - TANF	119,158,385	11,200,000	130,358,385
Emergency Assistance	500	-25	475
Food Stamp Training Expenses	32,397	-20,397	12,000
Connecticut Pharmaceutical Assistance Contract to the Elderly	6,813,755	2,674,945	9,488,700
Healthy Start	1,490,220		1,490,220
DMHAS - Disproportionate Share	105,935,000		105,935,000
Connecticut Home Care Program	75,724,600	-10,774,600	64,950,000
Human Resource Development-Hispanic Programs	1,040,365		1,040,365
Services to the Elderly	4,969,548	107,300	5,076,848
Safety Net Services	2,100,897	-525,224	1,575,673

* As adjusted by Public Acts 09-5, 09-6, and 09-7 SSS

PROPOSED APPROPRIATIONS

	2010-2011 Appropriated*	Net Adjustments	2010-2011 Revised Recommendations
Best Practices	475,000	-475,000	
Longitudinal Data Systems	775,000	-126,498	648,502
School Accountability	1,855,062	-51,778	1,803,284
Sheff Settlement	26,662,844		26,662,844
Community Plans for Early Childhood	450,000	-450,000	
Improving Early Literacy	150,000		150,000
OTHER THAN PAYMENTS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS			
American School for the Deaf	9,979,202	-498,960	9,480,242
Regional Education Services	1,843,181	-458,568	1,384,613
Omnibus Education Grants State Supported Schools	6,748,146	-6,748,146	
Head Start Services	2,748,150		2,748,150
Head Start Enhancement	1,773,000		1,773,000
Family Resource Centers	6,041,488		6,041,488
Charter Schools	53,117,200	-70,000	53,047,200
Youth Service Bureau Enhancement	625,000		625,000
Head Start - Early Childhood Link	2,200,000	-110,000	2,090,000
Institutional Student Aid		882,000	882,000
Child Nutrition State Match		2,354,000	2,354,000
Health Foods Initiative		2,634,110	2,634,110
PAYMENTS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS			
Vocational Agriculture	4,560,565		4,560,565
Transportation of School Children	47,964,000	-4,796,400	43,167,600
Adult Education	20,594,371		20,594,371
Health and Welfare Services Pupils Private Schools	4,775,000	-477,500	4,297,500
Education Equalization Grants	1,889,609,057	-426,769	1,889,182,288
Bilingual Education	2,129,033	-212,903	1,916,130
Priority School Districts	117,237,188		117,237,188
Young Parents Program	229,330		229,330
Interdistrict Cooperation	14,127,369	-3,000,000	11,127,369
School Breakfast Program	1,634,103		1,634,103
Excess Cost - Student Based	120,491,451		120,491,451
Non-Public School Transportation	3,995,000	-399,500	3,595,500
School to Work Opportunities	213,750		213,750
Youth Service Bureaus	2,947,268		2,947,268
OPEN Choice Program	14,465,002		14,465,002
Magnet Schools	174,631,395	-1,500,000	173,131,395
After School Program	5,000,000		5,000,000
AGENCY TOTAL	<u>2,738,830,871</u>	<u>-23,085,515</u>	<u>2,715,745,356</u>
BOARD OF EDUCATION AND SERVICES FOR THE BLIND			
Personal Services	4,356,971	-242,564	4,114,407
Other Expenses	816,317	-11,246	805,071
Equipment	100	-99	1
Educational Aid for Blind and Visually Handicapped Children	4,641,842	-7,899	4,633,943
Enhanced Employment Opportunities	673,000		673,000
OTHER THAN PAYMENTS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS			
Supplementary Relief and Services	103,925		103,925
Vocational Rehabilitation	890,454		890,454
Special Training for the Deaf Blind	298,585		298,585
Connecticut Radio Information Service	87,640	-4,382	83,258
AGENCY TOTAL	<u>11,868,834</u>	<u>-266,190</u>	<u>11,602,644</u>
COMMISSION ON THE DEAF AND HEARING IMPAIRED			
Personal Services	617,089	-617,089	
Other Expenses	159,588	-159,588	
Equipment	100	-100	
Part-Time Interpreters	316,944	-316,944	
AGENCY TOTAL	<u>1,093,721</u>	<u>-1,093,721</u>	
STATE LIBRARY			
Personal Services	6,369,643	-1,215,725	5,153,918
Other Expenses	817,111		817,111

* As adjusted by Public Acts 09-5, 09-6, and 09-7 SSS