

## **THE MAURICE FAMILY**

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To the Appropriations Committee:

Since coming to the United States over 30 years ago, I have been living in Connecticut and loving this great state. Currently residing in West Haven, my family and I have no plans of ever moving.

Even as I write this letter and contemplate the reason for writing to you, I am feeling some sense of remorse. Still, I remain optimistic compassion and a progressive vision will prevail. I am writing to urge you to restore a \$50,000 Line Item to support Litchfield Jazz Festival (festival) awarded through DECD for the first time in 2014. As very appreciative and proud Connecticut residents, we consider all art forms to be a facet of the rich culture of the state that has kept us here. My family is a musical family in multiple ways. My wife sings, our two sons, 15 and 18 years old, and I are musicians. I attribute our love for music to this state and the exposure we have had through the years. We have looked forward to the festival each year and never thought that funding would be threatened.

We consider the festival to be an investment. This 20-year-old festival is the culmination of a month of jazz education at Litchfield Jazz Camp for up to 300 CT students ages 12-18 from all over the state accompanied by a month of free concerts open to the public there and around the community. The city of New Orleans is a very special city to us, so much so our 18 year old son attends Xavier University currently as a freshman. He plays his second instrument, the electric bass weekly at a local church. We attribute the opportunity and his preparedness to answer such a call to his home state, Connecticut. This year, to honor regional citizens who assisted residents of New Orleans (the birthplace of jazz) after the Katrina disaster which marks 10 years around the time of the Festival, the organizers and sponsors of the festival have scheduled an opening concert to celebrate the music of the great city of New Orleans and to honor some of our local heroes. The Festival is the first outside organization to present in the new, \$97 million Performing & Visual Arts Center at Western Connecticut State University, and we hope to use this facility regularly in the future to bring jazz to a broader audience in CT.

Let's also not forget that the festival attracts tourists from various parts of the country to our state.

Sincerely,

Winfield Maurice,  
The Maurice Family