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nonprofit community.

H.B. No. 6824: An Act Concerning The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June Thirtieth 2017,
And Making Appropriations Therefor And Other Provisions Related To Revenue.

Submitted By: **Katie Scali, CE Manager – The Kennedy Center, Inc.**

March 6, 2015

Senator Bye, Representative Walker and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee, **my name is Katie Scali and I have been working with The Kennedy Center, Inc for over NINE years.** We are among the 500+ member agencies of the Connecticut Association of Nonprofits (CT Nonprofits.)

I would like to share my concerns with H.B. 6824, An Act Concerning The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June Thirtieth 2017, And Making Appropriations Therefor And Other Provisions Related To Revenue. In particular, I wanted to express my sincere concerns to the funding reductions in the Department of Developmental Services. This funding reduction would threaten critical services to individuals and families in our service area.

Community Experience Programs, like the one I manage, provides life experiences to young adults with Intellectual Disabilities. It also allows for social, vocational, and self-help growth through community, volunteer, and peer involvement. The consumers would be devastated if they were never able to attend a program like this that provides a safe outlet for them to figure out who they are and who they want to become. I told them about the proposed budget cuts and they were mortified that they may not be able to make new friends with the June 2015 graduates and that the new consumers may never get to have the same experiences that they presently do.

The proposed cuts, coupled with four rounds of rescissions/budget modification dating back to late 2012, have put enormous pressure onto an already severely depleted system. The reality is that nonprofit providers have been pushed to our breaking point due to the lack of investment over the past two decades. Chronic underfunding has already forced many nonprofits to close, compete against one another for scarce resources, layoff employees, reduce benefit packages; altogether creating a win or lose system that weakens the entire nonprofit sector and threatens its sustainability. **During my nine year employment, my wage increases have been very minimal (>1%). I, too, have a growing family of my own to provide for.**

As members of the Appropriations Committee work toward creating your 'Recommended Budget' for SFY16 and 17, I urge you to restore these harmful cuts to ensure critical programs and services are available to the residents of Connecticut. I'd also like to respectfully remind you that investing in the nonprofit sector will improve service delivery, increase economic activity, and save taxpayer money; a "win-win" for policymakers working to strengthen the economy, the nonprofit workforce trying to make ends meet, and most importantly, the clients and their families who count-on efficient, cost-effective, and high-quality services in our communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions, or for additional information.

Sincerely,

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