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ASSOCIATION  
of NONPROFITS

...to serve, strengthen  
and support Connecticut's  
nonprofit community.

## Testimony Before the Appropriations Committee

Submitted by: Patrick Johnson, Interim Executive Director, CT Nonprofits

H.B. No. 6824: The Governor's Proposed FY 2016-2017 Biennial Budget

March 6, 2015

GOOD EVENING, MY NAME IS PATRICK JOHNSON AND I AM HERE AS THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE CT ASSOCIATION OF NONPROFITS REPRESENTING OUR ALMOST 500 MEMBERS WHO ARE VERY DISAPPOINTED IN THE GOVERNOR'S PROPOSED BUDGET. FURTHER CUTS TO THE DDS AND DMHAS BUDGETS IS UNCONSIDERABLE CONSIDERING OVER TWO DECADES OF CHRONIC UNDERFUNDING. THE PRIVATE NONPROFIT HUMAN SERVICE AGENCIES THAT HAVE PARTNERED WITH THE STATE TO SERVE PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DISABILITIES ARE BEING ABUSED AND EXPLOITED BY THE STATE AND FORCED TO REDUCE THE AVAILABILITY OF SERVICES AND EXPLOIT OUR OWN STAFFS, MANY OF WHOM HAVE NOT HAD A RAISE IN 7 YEARS AND NOW POSSIBLY NINE YEARS. OUR LEADERS MUST COME TO TERMS WITH TWO REALITIES: **PEOPLE MATTER AND INFLATION IS REAL.**

MOST PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, WHETHER DEVELOPMENTAL OR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH IN NATURE, ARE EMPOVERISHED AND THE CHRONIC UNDERFUNDING IS GUARANTEED TO DRIVE THOSE WHO CARE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES INTO POVERTY AS WELL. WE BELIEVE THIS IS IN FACT THE PLAN; TO HAVE AS MANY WORKERS AS POSSIBLE IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR QUALIFY FOR FOOD STAMPS AND MEDICAID AND THUS SHIFT COST TO THE FEDERAL LEVEL. WHEN SNOW HAS TO BE PLOWED AND POT HOLES HAVE TO BE FILLED MONEY IS FOUND BUT WHEN SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES HAVE HAD NO FUNDING INCREASE FOR 7 YEARS AND AVERAGED LESS THAN ONE PERCENT FOR OVER TWENTY YEARS THAT'S OK. IMAGINE IF STATE REVENUE GREW BY LESS THAN ONE PERCENT FOR 20 YEARS. WHAT WOULD YOU DO? IMAGINE IF NO POTHOLES WERE FILLED FOR 20 YEARS. UNIMAGINABLE IN THIS BUDGET THAT IS FOCUSED ON ROADS BUT **PEOPLE MATTER MORE THAN POTHOLES** AND NO ONE SEEMS TO CARE BECAUSE EVERY YEAR THE POTHOLES ARE THE PRIORITY.

WE TALK ABOUT FLAT FUNDING FOR NONPROFITS BUT INFLATION RESULTS IN A NET LOSS BECAUSE COSTS INCREASE FOR OUR AGENCIES, CAREGIVERS, AND THE FAMILIES OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND EVERY YEAR THE STATE PRETENDS INFLATION DOES NOT EXIST. YOU HAVE SEEN THE DATA AND YOU KNOW THE FACTS AND YOU ARE AWARE OF THE INJUSTICE, THE NEGLECT, THE ABUSE PERPETRATED ON PRIVATE NONPROFIT AGENCIES AND THE PEOPLE WE CARE FOR AND CARE ABOUT. ALMOST EVERY LINE ITEM WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS IN THE DMHAS BUDGET IS CUT. DID SANDY HOOK MEAN NOTHING? DOES THE STATE NOT ACKNOWLEDGE THE FACT THAT WE ARE IN THE MIDST OF AN OPIOID CRISIS? THE DDS BUDGET TOO TARGETS THE MOST VULNERABLE WITH DECADES OF FLAT FUNDING AND NOW OVER \$50 MILLION IN CUTS AND RESCISSIONS ANNUALIZED DESPITE LONG WAITING LISTS, DESPERATE FAMILIES, AND DESPERATE CHRONICALLY UNDERFUNDED PROVIDERS. PROVIDERS OF SERVICE OVER A DECADE AGO, WHEN THE ECONOMY WAS BOOMING AND REVENUE WAS MUCH BETTER, GOT NOTHING BECAUSE OF THE SPENDING CAP. THE BOTTOM LINE IS THAT THE STATE IS EITHER INVOLVED IN A SADISTIC EXPERIMENT OR JUST DOESN'T CARE. I BELIEVE IT IS THE

LATTER. CUTTING THE BURIAL FUND FOR INDIGENTS ALMOST IN HALF IS DISTURBING ON MANY LEVELS. THE STATE BUDGET IS NOT JUST A SET OF NUMBERS. IT IS A VALUES STATEMENT AND IT IS CLEAR THAT THE STATE BELIEVES THAT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES DO NOT MATTER. **THE FACT IS THEY DO!** AND WE ARE HERE TONIGHT IN SOLIDARITY WITH ALL THOSE WHO ARE PURSUING THE RESTORATION OF CUTS AND INCREASE IN FUNDING THAT RECOGNIZES INFLATION **IS REAL AND PEOPLE MATTER!!!**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS MOVING FORWARD:**

#### **RESTORE CUTS TO THE DDS BUDGET:**

- Restore previous rescissions which were annualized (\$10.5 million in both FY 2016 and 2017)
- FY 2016: \$11 million below current Employment & Day Services
- FY 2016: \$4 million below current Residential Services
- FY 2017: \$19 million below current Employment & Day Services
- FY 2017: \$12 million below current Residential Services
- Oppose the transfer of Birth to Three to the Office of Early Childhood & DSS
- Restore funding for Caseload Growth (\$10 million in FY 2016 and \$26 million in FY 2017.)

#### **RESTORE CUTS TO THE DMHAS BUDGET:**

- Add back the \$25.4 million in cuts from 2014 to the Mental Health & Substance Abuse Grant accounts
- FY 2016 & FY 2017: \$718,158 for the Gatekeeper Program
- FY 2016 & FY 2017: \$736,250 for the Regional Action Councils and the Governor's Prevention Partnership
- FY 2016 & FY 2017: \$4.5 million in rescissions