



CONNECTICUT  
ASSOCIATION  
of NONPROFITS

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

**TESTIMONY on HB-6824**

**February 27, 2015**

**APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE,**

**CT GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

## ON BEHALF OF CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF NONPROFITS INC

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**By Patrick J. Johnson Jr.**

**Interim Executive Director**

Good evening! My name is Patrick Johnson and I am here this evening as the Interim Executive Director of the Connecticut Association of Nonprofits Inc. (CT Nonprofits) to speak on HB-6824 on behalf of our almost 500 member nonprofit organizations and the thousands of people they serve across the state.

We are profoundly disturbed to see that the chronic underfunding and additional reductions in public funding for essential human services continues across the state agencies including DCF and DSS. Over two decades averaging less than one percent increases constitutes abuse and neglect of your partners in the private sector. Just try to imagine for a moment what the state would have had to do if your revenue grew for two decades at less than one percent. I see in the budget language, cuts to increases caused by inflation, as if the state is in denial that inflation exists for nonprofit agencies. Denying the reality of inflation is like saying gravity does not exist and nonprofit agencies and those they serve should be able to just float above the problems they confront.

To further eliminate treatment options available to children in Connecticut will only create more gaps in the system. Therapeutic foster care providers receive an overwhelming number of emergency referrals from DCF. We strongly oppose elimination of two therapeutic group homes and a short term and respite (STAR) home.

I've been asked many times why nonprofit agencies are not going out of business if things are so bad. So I thought I would share the scary truth. We are in an abusive relationship with the state where twenty years ago we had three meals a day and now we are down to only one but grateful for the little we get without anywhere else to go except to come here. We not only care for but we care passionately about the people we serve despite the fact that we have become fiscally anorexic organizations. We won't abandon our mission no matter what. We balance our budgets every year on the backs of our staff by reducing benefits to staff, giving no wages for 5 to 7 and now possibly 9 years and although few nonprofits have gone out of business, a large number are on the brink and many have reduced the number of people they serve. Thus the abused are becoming abusers. Cutting services to the

desperately poor, traumatized children, people with disabilities, families in crises, people with dual diagnosis, says that we are an increasingly less civil society with an almost sadistic experiment underway to see how little those we serve and we can survive on.

We remain very concerned about the growing gaps in the continuum of care with the rapid decrease in congregate care settings, short term stabilization, and clinical options that support stabilization prior to a permanent placement. We oppose the movement of juvenile justice functions from C.S.S.D. in the Judicial Dept. to DCF. The \$10 million cut to pre-adjudication services is unconscionable when such services have been proven to turn kids' lives around and reduce recidivism and saves money.

One is forced to ask where is the safety net with these cuts and items like the elimination of teen pregnancy prevention in DSS which was lauded by the legislature just three years ago. The fatherhood initiative, Covenant to Care, Neighborhood Centers, Safe Harbors Taskforce, Services for Pregnant Incarcerated Women, and Family Support Services. Cuts in Aid to the Blind, Aid to the Disabled, Safety Net Services are slashed and even the burial of indigents being slashed is the exclamation at the end of the sentence that says to all of us that state government does not care about its most vulnerable citizens.

Others here tonight are sharing their stories and the facts about the impact of program cuts and we stand in solidarity with them. I just want you to know that we at CT Nonprofits see the impact of two decades of abuse and neglect of your nonprofit partners and we come to you to seek protection and an increase in funding that recognizes the reality of inflation and the true needs of those we serve. We want to cuts restored and an increase in funding. Inflation exists!!

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

**Patrick J. Johnson, Jr. LCSW**

Interim Executive Director

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