

*Testimony Submitted to the Appropriations Committee:*

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: Vincent E. Santilli, Board Member, The Kennedy Center

March 6, 2015

Senator Bye, Representative Walker and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Vincent E. Santilli of Trumbull, CT and I am a Board Member since 2011 and volunteer since 1988 at The Kennedy Center, which is 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 Human Services budget. This funding reduction would threaten critical services to individuals and families in our service area.

Our organization provides a myriad of services to people with disabilities across Western CT, including group homes. Not only are those services superior to those provided by the State of CT, but they are delivered at a fraction of the cost.

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. The section of the budget is clearly unacceptable to myself and to the people with disabilities whom I have served as a volunteer for nearly three decades.

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.

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