



**TESTIMONY FOR H.B. No. 5044:
AN ACT MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO STATE EXPENDITURES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR
ENDING JUNE 30, 2017.**

Submitted By: Marek Kukulka, Chief Executive Officer,
Catholic Charities, Inc. Archdiocese of Hartford

*To the Appropriations Human Services Subcommittee
February 11, 2016, Department of Children and Families*

Senator Bye, Representative Walker, Senator Flexer, Representative Abercrombie and Distinguished members of the Appropriations Human Services Subcommittee; my name is Marek Kukulka and I am the CEO of Catholic Charities, Inc. Archdiocese of Hartford.

Catholic Charities is a family and children's human services agency which provides services to over 26,000 individuals and families without regard to race, religion, or economic circumstances each year. The agency offers a wide range of human services across 34 sites in the Hartford, Litchfield, and New Haven counties. Services include: programs for families and children with significant mental illness, substance use disorders, basic human needs, case management services supporting employment and self sufficiency, parenting education, family centers strengthening local neighborhoods, group homes for developmentally disabled adults, services to victims of domestic or community violence, early childhood education, infant toddler care, comprehensive youth services, adoption, refugee settlement and immigration services, and elderly care.

Catholic Charities provides a wide range of services to Connecticut's families and children through contracts awarded by the Department of Children and Families. These programs are dedicated to empowering families to succeed by identifying and reducing barriers to responsible and effective parenting, access to vital behavioral health services, increasing access to community resources, and minimizing risk to children while preventing their placement in residential programs. Families are supported to address their challenges in parenting giving them both hope and support for critical changes needed for their bright and more hopeful future.

The governor's proposed budget threatens the health and well-being of Connecticut's families and children by cutting spending in every area of health and human services. These cuts include critical services to the State's most at risk families and children supported through the resources of the Department of Children and Families and contracted to private providers such as Catholic Charities. Without community services they will have no place to go to meet their needs and they may be forced to more costly alternatives such as emergency departments, hospitals, residential placements or jails.

The Governor's proposed cut of over \$27 million to block grants could disproportionately fall on, and in some cases completely eliminate, critical programs that serve some of the neediest, high risk, children in Connecticut.

Additionally, DCF's planned budget reduction in congregate care will jeopardize the safety and well being of Connecticut's children unless there is a significant increased funding for community based services.



Catholic Charities

Archdiocese of Hartford

I urge you to stop the \$27 million reduction in block grant funding that will impact community based services. Also, the reduction from congregate care MUST be reinvested in expanding and creating more community based services. We must work together to protect and support our most at-risk families and children.

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

Contact information Marek Kukulka, CEO, Catholic Charities, Inc. Archdiocese of Hartford
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