



In support of Governor's Bill 9 "An Act Concerning Transparency in Public Spending."

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Senator Bye and Representative Walker and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Michelle Riordan-Nold and I am the Director of the CT Data Collaborative. I'm writing in support of the Governor's Bill 9 "An Act Concerning Transparency in Public Spending." The purpose of the bill is to require state agencies to measure government program performance and make it available to the public.

One of the Collaborative's primary missions is to increase access to data for public use and for better decision making. We applaud the efforts of the Governor to encourage performance measurement and increase transparency. The CT Data Collaborative strongly supports the use of data to measure government programs. It is only through measurement of program performance that we can understand whether government programs are well run and whether their clients are better off.

Further, the CT Data Collaborative supports developing a new budget setting process whereby the state starts with revenue available. Then decisions are made based on data that shows whether agency programs are helping to achieve population level results. Critical to the success of this process is having the indicator data to demonstrate how the state as a whole is doing in achieving the desired results and performance data that show the aggregate effect that government programs are having in contributing to those results.

Performance measurement is increasingly a requirement for organizations seeking both public and private funding. As more data enters the public domain via state and local open data initiatives, the bar for data literacy rises. Being able to evaluate data quality, understand the limitations of data sets and otherwise be a critical data user is a key limitation facing organizations that seek to use available data to address problems throughout the state or within their communities.

Drawing on our history as a user-driven organization that has advocated for greater access to high quality data, convened stakeholder conversations, held statewide conferences and provided targeted technical assistance to local organizations, we are partnering with



Connecticut's Chief Data Officer, and will be convening and coordinating a Data Academy. The Data Academy is envisioned as a public-private partnership. The CT Data Collaborative will convene a working group that will have broad representation, including but not limited to, representatives from the executive and legislative branches, nonprofits, community groups, statewide organizations, and the business community.

As much as the nonprofit sector needs the assistance of the Data Academy, state agencies, too, need a better grasp of data and measurement in order to produce, present, and use the kinds of data envisioned by SB 9. The state's Chief Data Officer is partnering with the Data Collaborative because he recognizes the need for more comprehensive ongoing support for state agencies in building their measurement capacity.

The purpose of the Data Academy is to increase data literacy, build data capacity and enable nonprofits, state and local government, community groups, and organizations across the state to more effectively curate their own data as well as use open data and other sources for the purpose of understanding, measuring, advocating, and impacting lives. As the central convener, we will both help identify critical public data needed and also help citizens use the data that can impact their communities.

Data literacy includes the ability to read, work with, analyze and argue with data. Reading data involves understanding what data is, and what aspects of the world it represents. Working with data involves creating, acquiring, cleaning, and managing it. Analyzing data involves filtering, sorting, aggregating, comparing, and performing other such analytic operations on it. Arguing with data involves using data to support a larger narrative intended to communicate a message to a particular audience.

Our efforts in creating the Data Academy will help support the intentions of this bill as well. If we want better government, we need better data. We support this effort to enhance performance measurement and also increase transparency.

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