Good afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Formica, Representative Lavielle and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee.
My name is Chris McNaboe. I am CEO of Horizons -- a private nonprofit agency in operation for 40 years providing individualized services for people with special needs where they live, learn, work, and play.

I wish to comment on H.B. 7148 An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2021.

We appreciate that in the face of another difficult budget year Governor Lamont has sought to limit the budget impact on people served by Horizons and other nonprofits.

Nonprofits are dependent on the State for funding and have limited options in the face of budget shortfalls. We can't raise taxes or charges. We have grown Horizons person centered services over the past 40 years to address the changing needs of Connecticut’s citizen with intellectual disabilities.

Private Providers are the major work force in delivering services for DDS.

**Our staff** are the ones supporting 90% of all people in Supported Living and group homes. They can't “call out” in a snow storm or other bad weather.

**Our staff** are the ones job coaching 92% of the people in Employment and Day services. They are part of Connecticut’s economic engine, working to support people with intellectual disabilities in business such as: The Coast Guard Academy, Groton Sub Base, UCONN, Eastern Ct State University and Mystic Aquarium to name a few.

Our Staff provide **ESSENTIAL** services to Connecticut’s families and individuals with intellectual disabilities. We need to be included in the group of essential service providers that receive automatic COLA increases annually.

We invest over 100 hours of training in our employees. They are trained in medication administration, safely supporting people who have behavioral challenges, HIPPA compliance, Person Centered program development,
Abuse and Neglect Prevention and First Aid/CPR for example. They are professionals.

As you know, more than half of the state budget comprises “fixed costs” which are not subject to cuts. That percentage grows each year, and we appreciate the Governor’s tackling those costs.

There is a valued role for DDS in performing licensing and quality assurance. Let the private sector deliver the high quality services. Community nonprofits can reduce state costs and meet the demand for services.

Thank You.