Dear State Legislator,

CRIS Radio needs YOUR Help! Please reinstate an appropriation of $60,000 to CRIS Radio. The 76% cuts in state funding has impacted our ability to make available our various programs to more than 85,000 children and adults statewide.

CRIS Radio is more than a radio-reading service for people who are blind. CRIS brings words to life for more than 85,000 children and adults who are unable to read due to blindness or other print disability. Our service is available in homes, classrooms, hospitals, assisted living facilities and nursing homes, museums, group homes, and senior centers. CRIS is everywhere!

And we do this with the help of 200 dedicated volunteers around the state at our six studios – located in Danbury, Norwalk, Norwich, Trumbull, West Haven, and Windsor.

CRIS makes a difference in the quality of life for thousands of people, and with an increased appropriation, you can help us make that difference. Consider that CRIS offers more than 1,300 human-narrated on-demand podcasts of classroom materials for children who are unable to read due to learning disabilities in 100 schools.

But we can’t continue to offer this important service without your help. CRIS has slashed its budget to bare bones, and recently found it necessary to layoff one of our four full-time employees.

In years past, CRIS Radio received between $83,000 and $100,000 from the state. This has been cut to $20,194. The trickle-down effect of the state’s cuts to the nonprofit sector has ramped up competition for finite dollars, and as a result, needed services are not sustainable at current funding levels.
While we do not expect to receive the level of funding received in years past, we are urging you to reinstate a portion of the funding with an increase to $60,000. That would still amount to a 28% funding cut to CRIS, a more equitable reduction compared with cuts made to other nonprofits serving the state’s most vulnerable people.

Thank you for your consideration.

*Stephen Thal*

Stephen Thal,
Vice chair, Conn. Radio Information System