

From: Celina Kuemper (ckuemper@journeyfound.org)

Sent: 2019/04/27

To: Sean Scanlon, Douglas McCrory, Jason Rojas, Devin Carney, Rick Lopes, Robert Sanchez, Russell Morin, Holly Cheeseman, Christopher Davis, Larry Butler, Emil Altobello, Hilda Santiago, Mary Mushinsky, Vincent Candelora, Roland Lemar, Alphonse Paolillo, John Fonfara, Kevin Witkos, George Logan, Marilyn Moore, Carlo Leone, Henri Martin, Joshua Elliott, David Yaccarino, Stephen Cassano, Laura Devlin, Chris Perone, Livvy Floren, Nicole Klarides-Ditria, John Frey, Jason Perillo, Joseph Gresko, David Rutigliano, Steven Stafstrom, Jack Hennessy, Brenda Kupchick, Patricia Billie Miller, Joseph Polletta, James Maroney, Norman Needleman, Jason Doucette, Kerry Wood, Jill Barry, Quentin Phipps, Leslee Hill

Subject: Oppose the 25% Property Tax on Nonprofits with Savings Accounts (S.B. 1137 & S.B. 1138)

Dear [recipient's salutation and name],

I strongly oppose Section 1 of S.B. 1137 and Section 5 of S.B. 1138, which would require nonprofits with savings accounts or endowments to pay a 25% tax on property currently exempt from taxes.

I work for Journey Found, Inc., a Connecticut nonprofit that serves people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Every penny we get goes to supporting these people. This bill would directly impact our ability to do this, and would essentially be taking money away from the people who most need it. It would leave Journey Found in a position to try and figure out where to cut. Do we have to support less people? Put mileage limits on where the people we support are able to go? I would like to know what we should tell the families that live across the state, if that happens. We could be forced to eliminate vacations for the people we serve. These are all real things we have been forced to consider every time the funding is cut that pays for the services that we provide. And this bill would essentially be doing the same thing.

Nonprofits are forced to do everything we can to have alternate funding sources, including endowments, because the level of funding we receive from the government is continually being threatened. Every year a budget comes out, every time there is a deficit and recessions are necessary, we are left scrambling. Any public donation we are fortunate enough to get is necessary to try and counteract these threats and make sure we can continue providing serve for the people we support. As it is, even without the threats of funding cuts and proposed taxation, every year the cost of doing business goes up and our rates remain stagnant. 12 years of this. Imagine trying to support a family and run a household with the same amount of money for 12 years, as the prices of good and services rise around you. The price of gas and heating oil, the price of food and paper goods, these do not remain stagnant - we just need to figure out every year how to do more with less money. Add onto that business costs, like providing health care for our staff. Each year we cringe as we try and figure out where we have to cut to ensure we can continue to provide a decent health care plan for our employees who spend their lives caring for others.

This proposal would take funds from services for people with developmental disabilities and homeless shelters, from people struggling with substance abuse, victims of domestic violence, and arts and cultural programs, among other essential services that serve community needs.

Any tax a nonprofit is required to pay means fewer people will be served. Nonprofits provide services so government does not have to. Paying a tax to government takes away our ability to serve more people. This policy does not make sense, especially at a time when nonprofits are experiencing an increasing demand for services due to the opioid crisis, wait lists for residential services for people with disabilities, and more.

This proposal would also sabotage our relationship with individual and corporate donors who want their contributions to help people, not pay taxes. Nonprofits are already struggling to find and retain new donors.

Simply put, this proposal would divert critical resources away from the people nonprofits serve. It will hurt the most vulnerable people among us. I urge you to take no action on S.B. 1137 and S.B. 1138 unless this harmful proposal is removed.

Sincerely,
Celina Kuemper
172 Hynes Ave, Groton, CT, 06340

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