



Testimony of the  
**CT COMMUNITY NONPROFIT ALLIANCE**  
to the  
**APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE**  
Wednesday, March 6, 2019

Good afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Formica, Representative Lavielle and members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Jeff Shaw, Senior Director of Public Policy and Advocacy of the Connecticut Community Nonprofit Alliance (The Alliance). The Alliance is the statewide advocacy organization representing nonprofits, with a membership of more than 300 community organizations and associations. Nonprofits deliver essential services to more than half a million people each year and employ almost 14% of Connecticut's workforce.

I am here to testify on **H.B. 7148, "An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June Thirtieth, 2021, and Making Appropriations Therefor"**.

Governor Lamont's proposed budget largely recognizes the role played by community nonprofits in delivering vital services to the people of Connecticut. Despite a difficult budget year, the Governor would maintain funding levels for most of the programs operated by community nonprofits that serve our residents. We thank him for that.

While the proposed budget is a good starting point, years of state budget cuts to community nonprofits have resulted in loss of services, stagnant wages, layoffs, and program closures, which collectively threaten the quality-of-life for people and communities across Connecticut. Therefore, we urge you to treat the essential services provided by community nonprofits as if they are "fixed costs" in the state budget – and off the table for further cuts.

### **Office of Early Childhood**

- **The Alliance urges you to support the Governor's proposal to fund caseload growth for the Birth-to-Three program.**
  - The Governor proposed to add \$375,000 in FY20 and \$757,000 in FY21 for Birth-to-Three services to meet the developmental and health-related needs of infants and toddlers who have delays or disabilities and their families. Increasing caseload growth will allow more children in need to receive these essential services.
  - Each month, 1,200 professional staff, special education teachers, speech therapists, occupational therapists, board certified behavioral analysts and social workers, provide services for an average of 4,800 infants and toddlers with special needs and their families. Birth To Three saves the state millions of dollars in future special education costs. As an example, 53% of children that have received Birth to Three services no longer require special education services at the age of 5. Further, in FY16, 943 children

(or 29 percent), no longer required special education services at 3 years of age. At an average annual special education cost of \$28,861, this small investment saves the state \$27 million in the first year and every year thereafter.

- **The Alliance urges you to support the Governor’s proposal to annualize rate increases for Care 4 Kids.**
  - The Governor proposed to increase funding by \$14.4 million to reflect the Federal Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) funding increase as well as annualize rate increases of \$4.9 million beginning in FY20. Care 4 Kids helps low to moderate income families in Connecticut afford the costs of child care. This program expansion will allow more low income parents to work, rather than reduce their hours or chose between working or caring for their children.
  
- **The Alliance urges you to support the Governor’s proposal to annualize 1% Costs of Living Adjustment (COLA) for private providers.**
  - This proposal increases funding (\$327,000) to recognize increase costs for community nonprofits; organizations that provide services on behalf of the State that have not had an increase in funding for over a decade.

### **Department of Education**

- **The Alliance opposes the elimination of funding for the Leadership, Education, Athletics in Partnership (LEAP) program, a model mentoring program for youth development and juvenile justice.**
  - The LEAP Program mentoring program relies on \$312,211 to help match children, ages 7-14 years old, from high poverty urban neighborhoods in New Haven with trained high school and college student counselors to help develop academic skills, self-esteem, community involvement and improve their ability to succeed in school.
  - LEAP also provides its college and high school counselors with opportunities to teach and mentor children, and offer them training and other experiences to develop their leadership skills and refine their career goals.