



DATE: March 4, 2019
TO: Appropriations Committee
FROM: Julia Wilcox, Manager of Advocacy & Public Policy, The Alliance
RE: H.B. 7148 An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June Thirtieth, 2021, and Making Appropriations Therefor.

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

My name is Julia Wilcox, Manager of Advocacy & Public Policy, at the CT 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 appreciate the opportunity to comment 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 nonprofits that serve our residents. It's a good starting point and we thank him for that. **But there is more work to be done to make sure that payments to nonprofits cover the cost of the services they provide.** Because in many cases they simply don't.

Years of tough budgets included many cuts to nonprofits even as demand increased, leaving nonprofits to face an uncertain future. We urge your continued support of reentry services within the community which are essential to the ongoing success of the Second Chance Society Initiative. As of December 2018, there were 3,935 citizens of our state who were receiving community supervision from nonprofit providers who contract with the DOC. **This represents an 18% increase since December 2015, while the prison population was simultaneously reduced by 16%.** Thousands more receive services through providers who contract with CSSD and the Judicial Branch.

While **the Governor's budget proposes to maintain funding for Community Support Services**, it is important to note that this level funding follows years of flat and/or reduced funding for the Community Justice network of services. The ongoing success of the Second Chance Society Initiative is dependent on a strong and vibrant network of nonprofit, community justice providers. 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.

Court Support Services Division / Judicial Department

We thank the Governor for not making additional cuts to the juvenile justice system and urge the Committee to build on his proposal by allocating additional funding to provide safe and secure services for children and families.

Research and experience show that youth are better served through intensive, integrated, and individualized services within their community – with levels of supervision that meet their risk level. A well-designed and fully funded array of programs and services will ensure minimal need for more expensive, high end services. Over the last few years, the juvenile justice and related systems (education, children's mental health, child welfare, prevention and diversion) have faced deep cuts. When the Connecticut Juvenile Training School downsized and then closed, the funding saved

from the closure was not fully reinvested to ensure youth were well and effectively served through alternative community-based services.

In 2017, funding for Juvenile Justice services was transferred from DCF to CSSD. The transfer included a cut in funding to both CSSD and DCF, leaving both departments with inadequate resources needed to maintain essential services for youth. At the time, CSSD estimated a need of \$28 million in to adequately develop an array of community based, residential, and secure services. **We urge the Committee to fully fund CSSD to fulfill its mission.**

Additionally, we support the Governor's proposal to annualize the cost of toxicology services. \$434,000 is provided in FY20 and FY21, to reflect the increased contract cost of urinalysis/toxicology tests from \$6 to \$10.50. These tests may be court-ordered for probation supervision and pre-trial release.

We support the Governor's proposal to annualize the 1% Cost of Living Adjustment for Private Providers. This proposal increases funding in a number of state agencies (pursuant to Section 69 of Public Act 18-81). Within the Judicial Budget, the 1% annualization impacts the AIC (Alternatives in the Community) programs for juveniles and adults. We appreciate the support of the Legislature to pass the COLA last year.

Department of Correction & Board of Pardons and Paroles

We support the Governor's proposal to expand funding support in three key areas:

- **Medication Assisted Treatment:** The Governor has proposed \$2.1 million in FY20 and \$6 million in FY21 to phase-in Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) program in correctional facilities, for all inmates with Opioid Use Disorder (OUD). FY 2021 funding levels reflects full implementation to treat offenders with OUD at an estimated cost of \$100 per week for 52 weeks. We encourage the legislature to expand the program already in Osborn and York Correctional Institutions, and in the Hartford and Corrigan-Radgowski Correctional Centers, where MAT services are provided directly by private providers, into whose community-based services inmates can seamlessly transition when released.
- **State-Issued Identification for Inmates Upon Discharge:** The Governor has proposed adding \$230,000 in each fiscal year, to provide state-issued identification for inmates upon discharge. The lack of timely and appropriate identification has long been a critical barrier to the reentry process for individuals returning to their communities following incarceration.
- **Staff Training and Suicide Prevention:** The Governor has proposed funding for staff training and suicide prevention of Juvenile Offenders. The funding includes \$161,000 in FY20, and \$91,000 in FY21.

We support the Governor's proposal to reduce prison capacity through closure of select buildings and units, but **we urge the committee to invest these cost savings into the network of community nonprofit providers** who serve as partners to the DOC in the Second Chance Society Initiative. The proposed cost savings are \$4 million in FY20 and FY21.

- As of December 2018, there were 3,935 individuals receiving community supervision from nonprofit providers who contract with the DOC. **This represents an 18% increase since December 2015, while the prison population was simultaneously reduced by 16%.** Thousands more receive services through providers who contract with CSSD and the Judicial Branch.

We support the Governor's proposal to annualize the 1% Cost of Living Adjustment for Private Providers. This proposal increases funding in a number of state agencies (pursuant to Section 69 of Public Act 18-81). We appreciate the support of the Legislature to pass the COLA last year.

Thank you for your consideration and I urge you to support full funding for nonprofit community services.

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