



DATE: March 12, 2019
TO: Commerce Committee
FROM: Jeff Shaw, Senior Director of Public Policy & Advocacy, The Alliance
RE: H.B. 7307 AN ACT REQUIRING A STUDY ON TOURISM BY THE GENERAL ASSMEBLY

Good afternoon Senator Hartley, Representative Simmons, Senator Martin, Representative Cummings and members of the Commerce Committee:

My name is Jeff Shaw, Senior Director of Public Policy & 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony with regard to **H.B. 7307, An Act Requiring a Study on Tourism by the General Assembly.**

H.B. 7307 proposes to study the impact of tourism on the State and its economy. While we appreciate the intent of this legislation, the Connecticut Office of Tourism studied the impact of tourism in Connecticut in 2015. The study found tourism represents 10% of Connecticut's economy, generates \$14.7 million annually and supports 122,000 jobs. Indeed, tourism is a major economic driver in Connecticut.

Another major economic driver in Connecticut that often works directly with the tourism industry is the arts and culture industry. A similar study, though by the Americans for the Arts, found that arts and culture (separate and distinct from tourism) is an equally powerful economic driver in Connecticut. The 2017 study found that arts and cultural organizations (many of which are nonprofits) represent 5% of Connecticut economy, generates \$9 billion annually, and supports 57,000 jobs. Additionally, there is a \$7 to \$1 return on investment of funding for arts and cultural programs greater than the return on investment on tourism which is \$3 to \$1.

Arts, culture and tourism have historically been under the same umbrella, and had a symbiotic relationship with each other but operated within different silos of the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) state offices (Office of Tourism, Office of the Arts, State Historic Preservation Office, etc), each with different goals and different structures to support their work. The State would benefit from a unified vision for Arts, Culture and Tourism with shared goals. The arts, culture and tourism industries are dependent on each other, but have struggled to collaborate with one another due to current structured and uncertainty of funding. If a study is to be conducted by the General Assembly, I respectfully urge the Committee to include the impact of arts and cultural programs to Connecticut and the economy.

Arts and cultural initiatives lead to vibrant downtowns, support innovation and creativity, and provide an improved quality of life that attract businesses and families to live, work and play in the community.

Providing funding, marketing or additional resources for arts, culture and tourism industries is a good investment in Connecticut's future.

Thank you for your consideration.