

26 February 2021

THE ARC EASTERN CONNECTICUT – SERVING FAMILIES AND PEOPLE WITH
INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES FOR 69 YEARS

Good afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Miner, Representative France and distinguished members of the *Appropriations Committee*:

My name is *Kathleen Stauffer* and I live in Mystic. I am Chief Executive officer of **The Arc Eastern Connecticut**, and I am testifying *IN SUPPORT* of **H.B. 6439 An Act Concerning The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June Thirtieth, 2023, And Making Appropriations Therefor.**

1. PLEASE KEEP PACE WITH INFLATION & REAL COSTS. The Arc ECT respectfully requests that **Connecticut commit to increasing funding for its nonprofits by the full \$461 million, or 28%, by Fiscal Year 2026**; we ask that \$128 million (a state net of \$67 million after federal reimbursement) be appropriated in new funding for community nonprofits in Fiscal Year 2022, a 7% increase; **we request that funding be indexed to account for inflation, and that state funding keep pace with cost increases in the future.** *And please hold nonprofits financially harmless from the impact of COVID-19!*
2. PLEASE SUPPORT PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES. **Please support independence and self-sufficiency by reinvesting the proposed savings of \$4.1 million allowing approximately 300 people served by DDS to transition Individual Supported Employment Services** from group-supported employment or day services. **Please reinvest in DDS the proposed savings of \$2.3 million from funding reductions in the Behavioral Service.** Please ensure that the proposed savings of \$1 million in each fiscal year from closing one public Community Living Arrangement is reinvested to serve people with I/DD.
3. PLEASE SUPPORT OUR COVID HEROES! Please provide hazard pay for essential worker-heroes on the front lines; **Please acknowledge by passing this bill that procuring Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies is difficult and extremely expensive.**
 - *The Arc ECT managed to meet all participant and family needs in new and creative ways by rapidly pivoting to new and innovative service models not previously designed or used.*
 - *The Arc ECT protected the people and families it serves as well as its team of nearly 500 employees effectively with no funding initially for protective equipment.*
 - *The Arc ECT worked with the CDC, the State of Connecticut and CT's DDS constantly reviewing and revising service models and protective measure alike to meet all federal and state requirements as they rapidly and necessarily evolved.*

4. WHO WE ARE. The Arc ECT is a **69-year-old, grassroots agency in Eastern Connecticut founded by families** looking for NON-INSTITUTIONAL opportunities for **loved ones**.
5. WHO WE SERVE. The Arc ECT serves **900+ people with IDD** in Eastern Connecticut with a **constituent network of more than 2,500 voters**. Services range **from residential to in-home supports to employment services**. The Arc's Community Life & Advocacy program, funded by public events and United Way of SE CT, provides **critical respite to 200+ adults and families, support groups for survivors of domestic violence and sexual abuse, Special Olympics and rides to the polls so people with IDD can vote**.
6. JOBS. **The Arc ECT employs more than 440 adults contributing more than \$9,000,000** in wages to EASTERN CT's economy. **Nearly 30% of employees are minorities and 72.7% are women.**
7. ECONOMIC IMPACT. **The Arc ECT spends \$1.5 million each year on gasoline, fuel oil, groceries, office supplies, hardware, furniture and health insurance alone** and is a leader in advocating for the economic well-being of Connecticut.

Please support independence for people with IDD in Connecticut by supporting HB 6439!

Sincerely,
Kathleen Stauffer
Chief Executive Officer

