

THE CONNECTICUT POST
Letters From Our Readers
February 27, 2008

Urge Hartford to support vital nonprofit services

As president and CEO of The Kennedy Center, I commend the *Connecticut Post* for taking a strong stance on behalf of Connecticut's nonprofit providers. Your editorial, "Nonprofits left out of budget changes," which appeared on Feb. 15, presents a very honest and fair appraisal of the grave situation confronting 500 nonprofit providers across the state, including The Kennedy Center.

These nonprofits provide very vital and cost-effective services to the citizens of our state, yet they are

at a critical crossroads. In order to attract the best-qualified job candidates and retain employees, they have to offer realistic compensation packages. Nonprofit employees are consistently paid far less than state employees and that gap continues to widen as nonprofit organizations are consistently underfunded by our state.

Shocking, this year Gov. M. Jodi Bell has recommended a zero cost of living adjustment for these financially underfunded organizations in the next state

budget, which begins July 1. With health care and utility costs skyrocketing, this will create an extreme hardship and jeopardize survival for many of our state's nonprofits. These organizations presently serve about 500,000 clients annually and provide the majority of the social services provided to our state's citizens. In addition, the dedicated employees of these not-for-profits need to make ends meet and will be at financial risk given the current state of the economy.

I urge the governor and the

General Assembly to take a hard, second look at this budget line item. All providers must have adequate state funding to survive during these tough financial times. Lawmakers must find additional dollars to fund the vital services our nonprofits offer the community; otherwise, our future is in serious jeopardy.

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