

**Public Hearing on:**  
**H.B. 5005 An Act Adjusting The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June 30, 2021**

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

My name is Holly Buckley, and I live in New Canaan. I am a parent of a person with I/DD.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on H.B. 5005 An Act Adjusting The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June 30, 2021.

I oppose the Governor's recommended \$2 million cut to the Behavioral Services Program (BSP) which provides support to families and individuals age 8 to 21 with intellectual disability with a serious and persistent mental disorder that substantially interferes with their functioning in family or community activities. My oldest son Harry, who is now 22 years old, was a recipient of BSP funding for five years. I can tell you without exaggeration this program changed the course of my son's life and dramatically increased the quality of life for my two younger children, my husband and myself.

Without the interventions that the BSP allowed our family I am certain that Harry would be living in an institution or hospital. His self injurious and aggressive behaviors, on top of his absolute inability to communicate, left us exhausted and frightened and often unable to care for him and his siblings adequately. Funding from BSP provided Harry with after school programming and a few hours of weekend care as well as respite for two weeks of summer camp. This was an escape hatch for my family and for Harry at a desperate time in our lives. It was just enough to keep our family together. It was a safety net for my other two children and it allowed us a few hours every week to function like a normal family.

The Behavioral Services Program did not solve my problems. My son is still profoundly impaired and we struggle everyday to balance Harry's needs with our own safety. I love my son more than I can possibly put into words but I also love his sister and brother. The BSP program allowed us time to breathe and think. It provided us with a specific case worker rather than a call line which has been critical in navigating the DDS system through the transition to adulthood.

Please do not take this critical resource away from another family like mine.

Thank you for your time.

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