

Testimony before the Appropriations Committee
February 21, 2020
DMHAS BUDGET HEARING
H.B. No. 5005 AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE
BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2021
John Porter

Good evening Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee:

My Name is John Porter. I am a case manager at Intercommunity in East Hartford and I am a register voter in Bristol, CT. Although we are still hurting from the cuts over the last decade, I would like to thank Governor Lamont for not cutting funding this year. I would like to suggest that the appropriations committee take a look at the impact the cuts have had over the last decade. One suggestion would be to sit down with our workers out in the field to get a sense of how challenging this can be. We simply cannot be kicking the can down the road and hope for the best. I have been working in mental health for the last decade and have seen how the cuts by the state have directly impacted those in the community. The current system that we have, takes a very long time to navigate to accomplish anything. If we had more funding then we could hire more staff and help more people. This is not rocket science. The people that are served from this money are the least able to advocate for themselves and are often forgotten. How many stories have you heard of people falling through the cracks in our system? I can guarantee everyone in here has a story of someone that they know who has fallen through the cracks in the system. We need to strengthen our system with additional funding. Additional funds will help all of us to start to be able to catch these people who fall through the cracks and, just maybe make our society a better place that works for everyone. Through additional funding we could create a more sustainable system for everyone. One where there is enough staffing for everyone that needs help. And staff would be able to help people in a timely manner instead of the long waitlists that currently populate our system. The minimum wage is going to increase soon. Workers in the mental health sector have not seen a raise in a very very long time. If we do not increase funding, then workers will go else were for work and then we will be in even deep trouble than what we are already in. As you can see here today, we are a very strong group of people who just want a better life for everyone around us. We will be attending and speaking at the Finance, Revenue and Bond Committee public hearings coming up as well. This is a very important issue for a large number of Connecticut residents. Build your community by strengthening our safety nets. Give people a better chance of succeeding. We can all do this together. Thank you for your time and I hope to that you listen and consider what is at stake for all of us.

John Porter