

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

Good evening Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is John Williams and I am a registered voter in Norwich.

I am here to offer testimony regarding H.B. No. 5005 AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2021.

I am here to support the proposed budget for the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. I am one of the many faces of mental health and addiction in this state as I have struggled with both throughout my life. I am also here to express my strong support for non-profit organizations, such as Reliance Health, that receive the state funds you have cut in the past. These organizations give me and those like me the choices for programs and services that are very important to my life and my recovery.

Before I received services from Reliance Health, I was homeless for 6 years. I spent several years in and out of homeless and hospitality shelters and I had never had a place of my own. Even when I did have a home, I had always lived with someone. Now, because of the services I receive from Reliance Health through the Supportive Housing Program, Outpatient Mental Health Services, and help with my recovery from drugs and alcohol at Penobscot Place, I live by myself and have maintained my own apartment for the past 16 months. I have also continued to maintain my sobriety. In fact, on March 1st I will celebrate 22 years of sobriety, and it's programs like Penobscot Place at Reliance Health that have helped me in so many ways. I have also completed the training to be a Recovery Coach and hope one day to be able to help others with their recovery too.

Without Reliance Health, I don't know where I would be but it certainly wouldn't be in my own place and I doubt I would still be sober. Please preserve the funds for non-profits like Reliance Health; they have really helped to change my life. Thank you for allowing me to share my story.