

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:

Tiffany Falcone Perception Programs, Willimantic, CT

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

Hello, my name is Tiffany and I am a recovering addict. I have been struggling on and off for over 20 years.

My battle with addiction has been horrific and absolutely destroyed my life. I have been through tremendous trauma, dangerous situations, numerous inpatient stays at hospitals, over 20 inpatient rehab treatment facilities, multiple arrests, sober houses and years of incarceration. I have suffered multiple accidental overdoses and unfortunately have never really been able to cope with life in the real world after completing treatment. I do fabulously inside all of the treatment facilities, however when I've tried to be a productive member of society, I have failed miserably.

I would love to see communities stop focusing so much on addiction and focus on recovery and implement more incentive and programs to help rehabilitate recovering addicts. Sobriety and recovery should be celebrated, promoted in a positive, healthy and upbeat light, not looked down upon, shunned and make addicts feel stigmatized.

As an addict, It has been very hard to acclimate back into society, find a job with a criminal record, even find resources for help, lists of community resources, programs, etc. Many people do not have the financial means for a phone. Things should be set up financially accessible to all people from all walks of life. Literacy programs, ESL, resume building programs, life skills, parenting programs, etc. Its not easy to be a productive member of society especially with little education, limited skills for a job, lack of computer knowledge, language barriers, etc. As an addict, there is so much more to me than being an addict as well as most of the addicts I know. We are very creative, brilliant people who embrace our sobriety, crave knowledge, remain curious and teachable. I do not let my addiction define me.

We can accomplish amazing things with some love and public support. Please support an increase in mental health and substance use services. Thank you.

Tiffany Falcone, Willimantic