

**Public Hearing on:**  
**H.B. 6439 An Act Concerning The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June Thirtieth,**  
**2023, And Making Appropriations Therefor.**  
**Health Subcommittee**  
**Tuesday, March 2, 10:00 am**

Good afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Miner, Representative France and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

Galliehue Blevins, Manager Young Adult Services. The clients that my program serve are young adults, 18-25, with severe and persistent mental illness that enroll in our program to learn to manage their mental illness and how to live in the community independently. This is an intensive program that has the ability to provide housing for up to 9 young adults while serving the other 23 clients in the community. The Young adults in my program receive wrap around care by receiving clinical, case management, social rehabilitation, employment and educational services and psychiatric care.

I've been with United Services since 2004. When I was hired, I was a recent graduate, and placed into a level 4 position, the rate was \$14.03. Today, that same starting salary is now \$14.62. Staff are struggling. Many staff are unable to make a livable wage at United Services. I am now in the position of hiring staff, which is nearly impossible because offering a recent college grad \$14.62 is very insulting. A recent grad has now been given a several thousand dollar college loan bill. Several of the Young Adults we serve are making more at places like Amazon and Fed-ex than our staff. There are staff at our agency that are eligible for the same state assistance programs that they help their clients obtain.

I don't believe this is an issue that United Services has caused. I actually really like my employer and have great pride knowing that my company has a vast array of services to offer the community I live in. The quality of care will go down when we can't hire and retain staff. Caseloads get bigger and staff end up getting valuable training from us and move on. The client gets hurt in this scenario, because of the clients are affected by constantly getting a new staff person they have to work with.

For years we have supported all those who make up our community, it is time Hartford shows their support, to us, the struggling non-profit in Northeast CT.

United Services is the Local Mental Health Authority for 21 towns in Northeastern Connecticut. We are a nonprofit organization providing more than 30 programs to our community, including Outpatient Mental Health, Substance Abuse Treatment, Family Programs, and Crisis Services.

Thank you for your time,  
Galliehue Blevins