



Governor's Proposed Budget FY2021-23
Appropriations Hearing HB 6439 AAC the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30th, 2023
Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
Tuesday, March 2, 2021

Submitted by:
Lee Boratynski
Rapid Re-housing Case Worker
New Reach, Inc. in New Haven

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Representative Gibson, Senator Hartley, Representative Kennedy, Senator Somers, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee, thank you for hearing my testimony today on House Bill 6439 (AAC the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30th, 2023). I would like to discuss important items to support an end to homelessness in Connecticut.

My name is Lee Boratynski. I work in New Haven CT and am a resident of Ridgefield, CT. I have worked at New Reach Inc. for about a year, as a Rapid Re-housing Case Worker and Employment Specialist. I am also a disabled veteran of the US ARMY, I am a person who has a mental health diagnosis as well as person who has experienced homelessness himself. If it weren't for state homelessness programs and support, I would not be in the amazing position I am today-I have a fiancée, a full-time job helping others, I am back in college, and many areas of my life continue to get better! I needed a way out, and I was able to receive a housing voucher through the state and later the VA.

I know from firsthand experience that when our state's residents have stable housing, their economic and health outcomes improve. During COVID-19, permanent stable housing is more needed than ever. Increasing funding through DMHAS and this bill will be very important to addressing homelessness, as the funding across the board is just not enough for our program.

I can also say firsthand that, as far as addressing inequality, unfair privilege, and exclusionary policies, every single client I have helped is a minority. They have been hit the hardest by far. If you'd like to start chipping away at the glaring problems in fairness and equality, this is a great place to start!

I also would like to address the fact that my colleagues in human services and I make very little, yet we do such important work when it comes to helping the marginalized populations of



Connecticut. Homelessness cannot be minimized without us, yet many of us are drowning in debt simply because compassionately helping people through our work pays so little. My organization does what it can, but it can only do so much. I would highly recommend more funding to show workers like my colleagues and I that the State cares and that we are appreciated and valued. I want to keep doing what I do, however I also need to survive and soon may be forced to get other work due solely to pay.

Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to hear my testimony, I am grateful to be able to contribute to making a difference in Connecticut and hopefully even further. Thank you for considering everything and making the critical, life-saving decisions in these areas. Homelessness support can get so much better with your help, for both workers and people in need, so I implore you to ensure that every youth, family, and individual has a safe, stable place to call home.

Sincerely,

Lee Boratynski
Rapid Re-housing Case Worker
New Reach, Inc. in New Haven