

Testimony before the Appropriations Committee
March 2, 2021
DMHAS BUDGET HEARING
H.B. No. 6439, AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM
ENDING JUNE 30, 2023 AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR
By Debbie Bruno

Hello Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Debbie Bruno, and I am a registered voter in the city of Bridgeport.

I am testifying regarding the budget for the next fiscal year for the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, **H.B. No. 6439, An Act Concerning the State Budget for The Biennium Ending June 30, 2023 And Making Appropriations Therefore.**

I am testifying in support of increasing the budget for the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

When I first came to Bridge House (in Bridgeport) in 2019 I had a lot of trust issues. I did not trust many people, especially men. I had trouble with authority figures, and I had low self-esteem. One day two staff members, Josh and Todd, came up to me and were nothing but amazing with me. They showed me that they were determined to help me let my walls down and slowly—but surely—become comfortable in this new environment. A few days ago, when Todd came to deliver my food bank order, I expressed my gratitude by telling him that he was doing an exceptional job. He returned the compliment by saying that I was doing an exceptional job too and that I am an amazing person. These kind words sparked in me a greater love and appreciation for myself. I have started using more self-love techniques ever since. I feel like I have something to offer the world, like I exist, like I have feelings that matter, and like I have value. The efforts of staff have helped to play such a huge role in that!

Since the coronavirus pandemic hit last year, Bridge House and its staff have helped me to continue working on my self esteem and sense of self-worth. I have the confidence of knowing that I can go to them if I have a need. They also help me by allowing me to help in the clubhouse with tasks that I am good at.

More and more people like me are depending on programs and services like those that Bridge House provides. I am respectfully requesting that funding for the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services be increased and not reduced.

Thank you very much for allowing me to give my testimony.