

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
Donna Agnes Cimitile

Good evening, Sen. Osten, Rep. Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Donna Agnes Cimitile and I am a registered voter in the City of Bridgeport.

I am here to testify 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 have been a member of Bridge House since 2012. My life had finally come to an end as I knew it. I was no longer living but only just existing. My therapist at Life Bridge referred me to Bridge House. At first, I didn't want to go. My attitude was, "for what?" I am 69 years young and I have had a colorful life, to say the least. While being associated with Bridge House, I have overcome many hurdles. My mental illness (PTSD) is stable without medication. My stage four illness is in remission. I am no longer homeless, as I now have an apartment. Also, I keep all my health and periodic evaluations and appointments.

I attend Bridge House regularly, at least three times a week. I have also obtained and maintained sobriety since 2012. Bridge House has become family to me. When I had burnt all my bridges and gave up, Bridge House was there for me. I took off from there. Today I have integrity, a strong sense of community, and spiritual guidance. Because of preexisting medical conditions, and my immunity being severely compromised during the pandemic, I needed to become a recluse. Yet, Bridge House still found a way to be there for me! The staff did over-the-phone welfare checks at least twice a week. Items from their Food Pantry were delivered to my home weekly. I was given free diners, as well as household supplies when needed. They started a virtual community which allowed me to participate via Zoom. If they were to closed, I'd be back to square one again. Please keep us in mind. We are a good program and need these services so please increase the budget this time.

Thank you and warm wishes.