

**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 THEREFORE**  
Alonzo Gorham

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

My name is Alonzo Gorham and I am a registered voter in the City of Bridgeport.

I am testifying regarding H.B. 6439, *An Act Concerning the State Biennium Ending June 30, 2023 And Making Appropriations Therefore.*

I have been a member of Bridge House in Bridgeport since 2012. I was looking for support services because I was isolating. My doctor introduced me to Bridge House. Once there, I made friends. I became really excited about helping with the food pantry, placing the online orders each week, stocking the items that came in, doing the required paperwork (weekly and monthly statistics, etc.) and even driving the agency vehicles to pick up the food items from the Connecticut Food Bank. I am a church musician and I played the keyboard at our holiday parties and for our Black History program. I also do some computer work for the business manager. I became very excited and felt so good about myself, because I was able to contribute my talents to the program's operation.

In addition to my contributions at Bridge House, I attend the Catchment Area Council meetings, which are important to me because I get to learn about the wide array of resources that are available to me and to other people like me. It also makes me feel very good to know that I am at the same table with my providers. Also, I attended the Greater Bridgeport Disability Advocates for several years. This, too, was a great feeling for me to because I was treated with dignity and worth.

If there was no Bridge House, I would return to being depressed and isolated. Please consider maintaining the funding for mental health services, so that places like Bridge House can stay open. Thank you very much for listening to my story.