

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
Sandra Malley

Good Evening Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Sandra Malley and I am a registered voter of Bridgeport, CT.

I am testifying regarding the budget 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 a member of Bridge House since 2001. Before I came to Bridge House I was lost and in so much trouble. I was very unstable, had lost my family and friends, had huge legal problems, no place to live, and facing many years in prison. My life had spiraled from upstate New York back to Connecticut in the Bridgeport Mental Health Hospital. They referred me to Bridge House in 2000, and from there my life started to change. Bridge House was always open to refer me to places of therapy, housing, and even legal help. The resources they gave me to move forward with my life were the key to getting me stabilized and out of trouble. They literally gave me a reason to live with the services they offered to me: socialization, housing, temporary work, and education assistance. I have found my way back to a normal life as I know it. If Bridge House were closed today, I would have no where to go to have purpose; **as other places look at my past and hold it against me, Bridge House does not.** That is a big deal to me! When the Pandemic hit, Bridge House chose to stay open in accordance with the guidelines of Connecticut. They allow me to assist in their food bank to help others, which gives me a purpose. They help me remain safe and cared about, and make me feel worth something. I trust them completely and they know me for many years now, so I do not have to worry about starting all over again somewhere else. Which is also a big deal to me!

Please consider increasing funding and my story when the budget comes up for the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

Thank you for reading my testimony.