

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 THIRTIETH, 2023, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS
THEREFOR.

Karen Wilkie

Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee.

I am here to testify regarding H.B. No. 6439 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH, 2023, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.

My name is Karen Wilkie I am a registered voter from Waterbury Ct. I am a long standing member of Mental Health Connecticut's Independence Center, a non-profit program offered by the agency. I am asking for an increase in the funding, and not a budget cut.

The Center has been a vital part of my recovery and healing. Even through these Covid-scary times, the center itself is closed but staff is working from home and you can all a temporary number to reach them all during business hours. There is a daily virtual workshop via the telephone that helps keep us connected. I miss seeing the members and staff- the social interactions.

The center is also providing at least 4 meals per week and a food bag once per month.

I also respectfully request that the committee support the following proposals and expansions from the Governor's budget for the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS):

- I support the proposed budget for the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services' Housing Supports and Services line at \$23.4 million in each year of the biennium.
- I request a new targeted investment of \$2.25 million in the DMHAS' Housing Supports and Services line to provide supportive services to 300 households in scattered-site and development units.
- I request \$375,000 in new funding in the DMHAS' Housing Supports and Services line for enhanced outreach services that would enable us to better identify individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

I support the Governor's proposal to provide an additional \$4 million in FY22 and \$7.2 million in FY23 in DMHAS for continued discharges from Connecticut Valley Hospital, including 30 new Money Follows the Person placements.

- I request the addition of \$352,500 in each year of the biennium for wrap-around services for 47 individuals anticipated to receive federal HUD Mainstream vouchers during FY22.
- I support the CT Community Nonprofit Alliance proposal to restore \$461 million over five years to community nonprofits. Funding for nonprofits, including those working to end homelessness, does not adequately cover increased costs and demands for services.

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider my testimony.