

**TESTIMONY
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
SENATE BILL 639
MARCH 12, 2008**

**CHARLES MIMS
84 BUCKINGHAM STREET #C5
HARTFORD, CT 06106**

My name is Charles Mims, Advocate Organizer, with Advocacy Unlimited; I would like very much to speak in support of SB 639. I applaud this bill as progressive and innovative, and a bill with heart and insight. This bill recognizes that people sometimes have problems and are not really bad people. Underlying drug abuse is much emotional hurt and pain and the way to get at these types of issues is treatment not punishment; and of course people suffering from a mental health illness are in most cases in need of simply learning how to control and deal with their behaviors; again this is a treatment issue. I believe the amendment to this bill is also important as it involves including and involving families as much as possible because many family relationships are lost or strained because of drug abuse and mental illness.