

**Testimony
Public Health Committee
Senate Bill SB Bill NO 40,422
Legislative Office Building
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Good evening everyone my name is Maritza Carrion. I am a Community Advocate Educator from Advocacy Unlimited, Inc.

I am here on behalf of every one who has fallen victim to repeated incarcerations due to a mental illness that went undiagnosed for lack of funding and resources in our communities and correctional facilities.

I want to also remember the children who have siblings or parents incarcerated or have died of mental illness and substance abuse related complications caused by the lack of services and education. These are the ingredients that create the stigma that paralyzes our communities.

I love my Papa, he lived through my dual diagnosis of addictions and depression in progression, that almost took my life. On February 28, 2008 my Dad turned 80. Eighty years young, and two heart attacks later he survives to see me clean and sober educated and fighting for a cause that almost killed me.

The Experienced Blessing

I've worked in the Mental Health Field for four years with a many who have all their limbs but feel paralyzed at times. I live with a Passion and fight for a cause for funding that my children and maybe yours depend on. I want to say thank your funding in the past the Jail Diversion Programs, Youth and Mentoring Programs. My nine year old son LaVaughn has participated he also lives with a diagnosis of emotional disturbance and A.D.H.D.

Funding the jail diversion, housing and youth programs has allow mental and spiritual growth in my family today we are grounded a family unit working together,. I believe there are lots of Dads like mine that would like to see their sons, daughters or a loved one have the same opportunity. New chances at life with their family not advertising on a bill board please adopt our children.

Let's fund Jail Diversion, Housing, and Youth Programs.