Testimony
Public Health Committee
Budget Hearing
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My name is Charles Mims, Advocate Organizer with Advocacy Unlimited, and I want to say a few words about the supportive housing issues before this committee. As it relates to S.B.40 I encourage you not to implement this budget in its current form. To continue to move forward in small incremental steps only delays the important and vital help the people of this community need. People living with mental health and addiction disorders have for a long time been treated as second class citizens by the society at large and even by those with the assignment of their care; and I am afraid that even fiscal policies of this state and others this stigma persists. Every person in this society has value and has the same rights and privileges in spite of their infirmities; I would really like to believe this.

S.B. 422 is I believe a bill with a heart as it realizes that treatment and not punishment is the way to go in some cases. A person with mental health issues in most cases is better served by receiving the treatment they need as opposed to being incarcerated for non felony offenses. I would also like to say that even in the case of more serious offenses that even while incarcerated treatment would also be applied with exit planning to a supportive housing situation; this would minimize reocurances

I would also like to reference H.B. 5449 as it relates to the issuance of Emergency Certificates by Licensed Clinical Social Workers and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses. I'm afraid that I don't think this is a good idea particularly as it is my understanding that only 8 hours of training is require to obtain this certification. Doctors go to school for many years to obtain the expertise required to make these kinds of judgments. From the perspective of people with mental health disorders that after being hospitalize we have little to no say in our lives from that point on; it is a serious loss of control in ones life. This bill just gives more people the power to take away the right, and I repeat the right to refuse treatment unless a harm to your self or others. I see nothing wrong with the way things are currently done; so I say if its not broke don't fix it.