

Testimony before the Appropriations Committee

December 9, 2009

**The Governor's Proposed Deficit Mitigation Plan
and the Impact of the Governor's Rescissions**

Good afternoon legislators. My name is Theresa Bissonnette. I am from Willimantic, CT. I am here to speak against the Governor's rescissions and proposed cuts. I wish my opening statement to be Victims No More. In elementary, junior high, and high school I was a straight A student, member of the honor society and class President. I graduated from Toledo School of Practical Nursing with high honors, 2002 from TECO Criminal Justice Academy in Kissimmee, FL and in June of this year from Eastern CT State University with a major in political science and psychology. I took my LSATS receiving high scores that led to my acceptance into UCONN and Yale Law School. I have been a martial artist for 27 years and am a 3X world champion fighter. Great achievements I believe we can all agree upon, but this is only looking outside the box. At home, behind closed doors, a picture speaks a thousand words that 3 minutes won't allow me to explain. Summed up, my childhood led to DCF taking full custody of me. I never had my day in court, but every time I come in front of all of you it fills that void taken from me. When I turned 18, DCF showed me the door without any doctor or counseling supports or guidance. I knew nothing about how to live, work, get an apartment. I didn't even know about homeless shelters or soup kitchens. All I knew was to go back to the very people DCF took me from. I was forced to sacrifice my body to the sex offender. Fast forward to today: I was married for six years to a man that beat and raped me. He will never be charged for his crimes of abuse simply because I am the "crazy woman" that the police refuse to believe. They are convinced it is all in my head and yet again a picture speaks a thousand words.

Today, to the outside world, I am a highly educated woman, but inside lies the darkness of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Multiple Personality Disorder. My insurance does not cover treatment that could possibly give me the life I never had. Don't all of you think past and

present DCF children have suffered enough pain? It is a big deal when adults see children abused – it tears our hearts out and so many die. But the ones who live and grow up are all too often haunted by mental illness with a lack of financial and medical stability. A medication co-pay means life and death for me. Rent or medication. Have we not suffered enough?

These crucial cuts to the mental health system must stop permanently. This is not a choice, just as economy is not more important than humanity. We need more, not less, as less is all we have ever had. It is time my government reaches people who re tortured, abandoned, abused, stigmatized, neglected: America's most vulnerable. So I, Theresa Bissonette, ask that you all vote "NO" on these proposed cuts and help America's most vulnerable people to be "Victims No More!" Be a part of the solution and remember to "Keep the Promise!"

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