



Service, Education, Advocacy
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Good Morning, Chairman and members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Dominique Thornton. I am the General counsel and Director of Public Policy for the Mental Health Association of CT, Inc., (MHAC). MHAC is a 100-year old private non-profit dedicated to service, education and advocacy for people with mental health disabilities. Thank you for the opportunity to tell you why I support an amendment to House Bill 6218 An Act Establishing a Task Force on Safety Net Policy.

This initiative is one that the Association does wholeheartedly welcome. However, it would appear that the individuals and providers who serve them have not been included. Those who provide and those who receive services from the safety should be at the table. Individuals and families, who have no other resources and nowhere else, must turn to the safety net for life saving support. The safety net is the place of last resort. The safety net provides food, shelter, heat, medical treatment. In short, the safety net provides the necessities to sustain life. While the concept of a task force on safety net services is an excellent one, the Mental Health Association has always stood for the position that there should be "nothing about us without us." Without consumer and provider input to evaluate the services and how they are delivered, we may know not if we are accomplishing the goals we envision because we have not heard the voices of those we hope to sustain.

Please give this excellent policy, the force of law by passage of House Bill 6218 with an amendment that includes a place for consumers and providers on the task force. Give voice to those who actually experience Connecticut's Safety Net.

Thank you.