Good Morning Members of Appropriations and Human Services Committee and guests,

My name is Thomas Cooper and I am here this morning to testify against the implementation of the Medicaid Waiver for Low Income Adults. I am 21 years old and am on Medicaid. I have previously been cut off from Medicaid because my mother supposedly made too much money. I am unable to afford medical insurance on my own because I do not have a job and have health problems which prevent me from working at this point. I do not have any income right now. I am working hard at becoming independent from my mother and to do this, I am working with many providers on having bariatric surgery. I believe that this surgery will greatly enhance my life and I will be able to finish school and get a decent paying job. If my mother's assets are counted, I will be ineligible for Medicaid and with my health problems will result in a greater burden on the taxpayers of CT because I cannot afford my prescriptions or medical care.

When I was cut off Medicaid, I was unable to get my medication and this was not good for my health. I am on a path to wellness and without insurance it is not possible for me to follow through. Additionally, I have experienced long waits in attempting to contact my worker at DSS. I have sent in paperwork on numerous occasions only to be told that DSS did not get it. This has happened to way too many people I know. DSS is obviously overburdened and cannot keep up with the paperwork they are sent. I am not even sure who my worker is at this point. I have no one to direct my questions to.

If this waiver goes into effect, it will be catastrophic to many of Connecticut's citizens. But most off all, people like me who are adults but young enough that our parents can still claim us on their tax return. I am not able to live on my own, my mom cannot afford to provide me with health insurance, and now the state is considering dropping me as well.