

I'd like to thank the Chairpersons and members of the Health and Hospitals subcommittee for allowing me to testify this evening.

My name is March Fisher from New Britain. I am a residential instructor at Alternative Services in Colchester. I've been with this agency for over 11 years, but have worked in the human service field for over 20 years. Right now, I work in a group home with individual with developmental disabilities, but in the past I've worked with the homeless and individuals with who suffer from drug and alcohol addiction.

I didn't choose to work in this field to make money, but I want to be able to make a living. I haven't had a raise in 6 or 7 years. I don't have a family, but I know co-workers that do. Right now, I couldn't afford to have a family. Our health care is reasonable for me, as a single individual, but a family would pay over \$400 a month for coverage. On around \$15 per hour, that kind of cost would take a big chunk out of my paycheck.

Recently our supervisors have talked about impending cuts to DDS, specifically for not-for-profit providers. They mentioned lowering our wages by almost \$1 per hour to recoup their losses. They are also reviewing our hours and determining where they will make reductions or let people go.

In the last four years, I've had to move 3 or 4 times because rent is expensive and I can't afford to stay in my apartments. I've had to make payment arrangements with my utility companies.

It's hard for me to do a good job because I'm stressed out. That affect the people I treat. I haven't been sleeping well. It's really a struggle. I live paycheck to paycheck.

I'm here today asking for your support to protect the safety net and not cut funding to our community service programs. Thank you very much.

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