



State of Connecticut
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**Testimony of Rep. Mary Mushinsky (85th) in Support of SB 972, An Act Concerning
Children and Behavioral Health**

Before the Children's Committee
Tuesday, March 5, 2013 11:00 a.m. in Room 2B

I'd like to thank the Children's Committee for their concern for children's behavioral (mental) health, as shown by raising this bill. I was a former chairwoman and 20-year member of the committee, and children's concerns are very important to me. The committee should be aware that Program Review and Investigations Committee also has two bills covering this subject, as a result of our recent investigative study that determined private insurers are not treating mental health in young adults with parity to physical health, as required by both state and federal law. We found that state insurance, on the other hand, treated youth with mental health issues fairly. Children who are not treated early for mental illness only get worse. Youths with untreated mental health problems become an enormous financial and societal burden for our state.

PRI reported that parents of these troubled youths on private insurance were frustrated in their attempt to get help for obviously deteriorating family members. Parents experienced delays in obtaining treatment or were denied outright. They did not know how to appeal denials of care. There was little enforcement of parity by the Insurance Department. Our report recommends reforms which are contained in two bills, HB 6517 (enforcing parity compliance) and HB 6557 (using the grievance process). We encourage your committee to join forces with us as we move these bills forward and work together to improve children's mental health.

