

Tiffanie Donovan HB 5145

Human Services Public Hearing

February 27, 2014

Testimony in support of H.B. 5145

Good Morning members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Tiffanie Donovan, I am a Student in the BSW program at Southern CT State University. I am currently interning at Dixwell Newhallville Community Mental Health Services in New Haven CT. I am writing up this testimony to support bill 5145, in accordance to revisions to The Department of Mental Health and Addiction services' statutes.

First off, I wanted to thank everyone for taking the time to read my testimony. There are many revisions that the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services would benefit from. There is an adequate need for more training for individuals providing therapy to clients. It is important that Social Workers/Psychologists get sufficient training to be able to provide the best service possible and to be knowledgeable about clients' needs. Also, funding for public awareness hearings would be very beneficial to help with the stigma associated with people who have mental health and addiction problems. Many people are targeted and misunderstood due to their illnesses, so having public awareness campaigns at least once a month would be a great way to make the public aware of what these people are struggling with. There also should be more coverage for people who are in need of counseling for these illnesses. Many people in need for substance abuse/mental health counseling do not get the help they need because their health insurance does not cover it. If the state made a change providing more coverage for people in need of care, then more people would get the services they need. Lastly, many agencies would benefit from having more workers available, so that the workers are not overwhelmed with caseloads.

I realize that this would be costing the state a bit more money, but it should be focusing on the health and wellness of its people, rather than the money being spent to get them there. Many people struggle daily with these illnesses, but can not get sufficient help due to the lack of services/knowledge base in this area of care. Therefore I am asking that the committee votes favorably for this bill, so that we can get the changes we need for The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. Thank you all again for your time today.

Tiffanie Donovan, BSW Student