

Good Afternoon Senator Bye, Representative Walker, and honorable members of the Appropriations committee. My name is Jose Castillo and my family and I have been long time residents in Hartford, Connecticut for the past 23 years.

I would like to start by thanking all of you that are providing us with the opportunity to speak about the impact that the proposed cuts to grant funds and Medicaid rates will have on me and my family, my friends, and not to mention all the local people who are struggling through tough times and trying to get back on their feet.

Whether they have been struggling to stay afloat in our economy or have just gotten out of jail, parole, or probation. We the people need these programs to help us build our lives back, pick up the pieces, and be able to provide for our families. The programs help us build and structure our lives, become tax payers again, and to vote like real members of society.

The Wheeler Clinic is helping our communities get back on track. I am an outpatient client at the Wheeler adult behavioral health center here in Hartford. The Wheeler Clinic has been helping me find my way back to society one step at a time. I was in a car accident in 2001 and I fractured my left femur and had a traumatic brain injury. I was in bed for 7 months, was on 14 different medications, and became very depressed. I started going to Easter Seals and had to learn how to walk, read, and write all over again. Since then, I have witnessed a lot of community violence and used to turn to alcohol for my posttraumatic stress.

At Wheeler, I am attending weekly 90 minute groups. I'm almost done with the 12 sessions I was required to complete. Our clinician Mr. Peter is the best at what he

does and is always there to listen when we need him. In groups we learn how to open up and talk about our problems. We learn how to not take the easy way out. We learn how to appreciate, trust, help, and respect one another.

The Wheeler Clinic is also in the process of providing me with a doctor to continue my medications. I plan to continue outpatient services after I complete the group so I can continue to heal.

I am grateful for having the Wheeler Clinic helping our communities get back on their feet. Now we are able to provide for our families and give back. This community needs Wheeler Clinic and needs these services. Thank you for your time. Have a good evening.

Jose Castillo

Hartford, Connecticut