

Testimony of Marisa Giarnella-Porco-Social Worker

Concerning funding for Regional Action Councils in

H.B. No. 6824 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2017, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR AND OTHER PROVISIONS RELATED TO REVENUE.

Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services - March 6, 2015

Senator Bye, Representative Walker, Senator Gerratana, Representative Dillon and members of the Appropriations subcommittee, my name is Marisa Giarnella-Porco, I am offering testimony in strong opposition to the proposed cuts to the regional action councils.

In my community the regional action council has provided suicide prevention gatekeeper training (QPR) to thousands of individuals, through a network of providers and agencies. As the CEO and President of the Jordan Porco Foundation in Hartford, I have witnessed the tremendous impact CASAC has had on our community's suicide prevention efforts. We have collaborated with CASAC to introduce this valuable work in settings that would not have normally addressed this public health issue without the networking that is at the heart of prevention. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for individuals under the age of 25. I lost my son to suicide four years ago. I can only reflect on the countless lives saved because of the impact of QPR training across the state over the past two years. The economic burden of suicide is tremendous. The work of the RAC's in Connecticut is multiplied by the relationships and dedication of the leaders serving in the positions. These cuts will turn back the hands of progress. Community relationships are an integral component of prevention work. Suicide prevention save lives.

Thank you.