

February 17, 2016

Senator Bye, Representative Walker and Honorable members of the appropriation committee:

Hi, my name is James Green,

I am in recovery for 22 years now. When I was 23 I went to inpatient treatment program at Blue Hills, at that time they were offering 21 days for treatment, but before that I had been using for crack cocaine for 10 years at that point, and 21 days of treatment was not enough, I ended up staying for 3 months. When I walked through those doors, I thought, "I want to get clean, and I want the right people to help me do it." When I was there, I made a connection to a peer counselor who helped me stay focused on my recovery, I said, "If I went back out there, it would be a waste of money as I would have kept using, I have friends who were still using." I was not ready to go back home, because I wanted my sobriety, people thought that I was just killing time or wasting state's money, they gave me a chance, when the last day came, they shook my hand and said that I did a good job, after that I felt like I was a new person. I used to be nervous going outside, I felt paranoid. I used to be outside on a mission when I was using, I had to learn how to be outside again and be calm. It worked out well for me, but people I grew up with are still using and are struggling, my life changed and I felt good about myself. I think that change is possible if you're willing to put in the work. I told my daughter the other day, I don't think I would be around today if I hadn't stopped using, I think it's a miracle.

I burned a lot of bridges when I was using, I was bad, I stole from my family, my mother said she would pray for me. If someone came around me the way I was, I would say don't come around me. No matter what I did to them, my family had my back. After I got sober, some people were mad that I was clean because I made a lot of guys rich. My family was happy that I was rebuilding my life, it was good. It can be hard because people don't like giving you a second chance, which is why these programs need to stay around because they help you get that second chance. Any day I'm clean and off of drugs, I'm happy.

Recently I came back for outpatient treatment on my own, and I found this helpful, I could learn something from everyone. I was able to apply what I learned to how I can use it in my life.

I've been in the state of Connecticut my whole life, and I think a lot of people need a lot of help, I think if we don't help these people a lot of the towns are going to be significantly affected. I think if people are out in the streets using and not in programs, it will be dangerous and we will need more police. I think it's going to be bad. I can say that because if a judge had not guided me to one of these programs, I would be one of those people. Instead I can say I've been clean ever since.

Thank you for your time, please make the right decision,

James Green

Hartford, Connecticut