

## TESTIMONY BEFORE THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

Good evening Senator Bye, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Maryse Capobianco and I am a registered voter in Wethersfield

I am here to testify on the Governor's proposed midterm budget adjustments related to the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

I understand the fiscal crisis and that these will be hard decisions for you as legislators, but I want to express my deep concern about and opposition to the deep and devastating proposed cuts to mental health and behavioral health services and supports.

These services are extremely important to me as a parent. My son, David, displayed symptoms of schizophrenia when he was 17 yrs. Old. I did not know what to do. I was lost and devastated. It was by chance we found ourselves at Intercommunity in East Hartford and that would be the beginning of help and a diagnosis. But it was not the end of the difficulties one lives with when dealing with mental illness. David would be in and out of hospitals for the next 14 years. David thought of and talked about suicide often. He was depressed all the time. Life never seemed to get better for David. Through the years his drug habit escalated, in part to offset the side effects of the tremors his medications gave him. Hospitals knew David had a drug addiction problem but he was sent home each time and advised to get help. He tried a few outpatient programs but didn't work for David. He needed extensive in-patient treatment. I found out Husky D would have given David the inpatient help he needed but he didn't qualify because he was on Social Security Disability. If he had been classified as low income he would have been able to get the inpatient services he so desperately needed.

As his depression and drug problem worsened so did his judgment. David was full blown delusional, hearing voices, psychotic and using drugs daily the last time he saw his psychiatrist. I needed a referral. Instead David was sent home and I was given a phone number to call. The next day my son went missing. That was December 11<sup>th</sup>. He hasn't been seen or heard from since. I live daily with thoughts that he killed himself. Hopefully someday David will be found, and if/when you hear about this in the news, I pray that your very next thought is how glad you are that you did not cut funding for those who still so desperately need these services. It may be too late for my son, but it is not too late for the many families who live in our towns and communities all over the state of ct who struggle with all that comes with mental health and addiction problems. Those with mental health disabilities are at a disadvantage. They can't fight for themselves. They depend on us. They can't ask you for help,...but I can.

Please reconsider the proposed cuts to the department of mental health and addiction services.

Thank you so much for listening to me today.