

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**  
**H.B. No. 5044 An Act Making Adjustments to State Expenditures for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2017**  
**February 18, 2016**  
**Britney Bidmead, Ellington, CT**

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

I sit before you this evening, with a plea to consider creativity as you move forward in the committee's allocation discussions. I work closely with Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to improve the programming provided to the young adults throughout the state of Connecticut. It is through entrepreneurship ventures and our adaptive work and learn model that we have succeeded in improving not only the amount of young adults employed, but also the quality of employment positions that they are filling.

I see what creative funding can do to positively impact people every single day. This programming bridges the gaps created by an educational void, eliminates barriers created by stigma, and lessens the impact of transitional trauma.

The thought of budget cuts to quality health services, like those that I and DMHAS provide, disappoint me because of the detriment we are passing onto our most challenged, and downtrodden citizens. The people who are helped by our programming services are Connecticut's most socioeconomically challenged. Our most disadvantaged.

Cuts to these services do not just tug at my heart strings. They create even larger state challenges that will impact Connecticut in our lifetime. By cutting funding to mental health services, a large segment of our population would be forced to seek alternative resources in other overburdened areas. Consider the costs of increased hospitalization, and taxation on medical employee resources. Prisons could become our new supervised housing and law enforcement professionals will be our community outreach therapists. Most importantly, you are pushing the mental health care of our youth onto their educational system.

These proposed budget cuts affect more than just our financial wellbeing as a state. Connecticut could be creating a less productive lifestyle and rippling effect for a lifetime of need and dependency. By denying proper funding for innovative programming, you are eliminating resources needed to continue supporting those on the path to independence, satisfaction and self-actualization.

Let us continue to invest our money human growth and potential. The dividends will be exponential.

Thank you,

Britney Bidmead