Testimony before the Appropriations Committee  
Friday, March 1, 2019  
Governor’s Proposed Budget FY 2019-2021  
Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS)  
HB 7148 An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium ending June  
Thirtieth 2021 and Making Appropriations Therefor  

Hello all, my name is Gerard Duggan. I am a voter from Enfield, CT for quite a few years. I hope you all are having a pleasant day so far. I am here today to talk to you about my own thoughts on one aspect of the DMHAS budget regarding funding community based mental health services as an alternative to incarceration and institutionalization. I cope with mental health issues but I have also run into some trouble with the law in previous years. Nothing too serious but it was enough to earn some jail time. Over one part of my life I ran into other people who were involved in the prison system. I heard a lot of their concerns for people who are convicts. It is hard for them to find work because of their titles. They usually end up doing odd jobs and the like. While many look down on convicted felons, some are actually really decent people and sometimes are arrested and were actually innocent. These people that I came across did not have treatments for their mental health issues. Imagine if someone is having a hard time with their untreated mental health issues and gets thrown into jail or prison for something that is out of their control or even something that wasn’t really their faults. My best friend in the world who is no longer with us had a bad run in with his doctor not giving him his prescription in time and he became so paranoid that he attacked someone. He is the kindest soul with the most amazing humor. He wouldn’t hurt anyone. But that day, he was so far into his issues because of his doctor, pardon my French, screwing up, that he ended up institutionalized for many years. Only to die from cancer as soon as he got out from their program which took forever to get out of. It’s hard enough to have mental health issues and be thrown into a dark system like prisons or asylums. It’s scary and lonely at times. I hope there are more programs put into place so these people can lead easier lives that will definitely help improve their longevity and happiness by going through better rehabilitation and have more freedom. It’s wrong to incarcerate someone and expect them to flourish when they’re trapped or feel trapped by a damaging system. So many people are in prison right now for
various reasons. While many deserve it, not everyone does and people fall through the cracks sometimes. I feel for these people. Please consider my fallen comrade and others that fall through the cracks sometimes. Thank you for listening, have a wonderful rest of your day.