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

My name is Andrew Kellogg and I'm a registered voter from West Hartford.

I am here to testify regarding HB 7148 – AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIAUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH, 2021 AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.

I'm in favor of the proposed DMHAS budget but my concern is that the DMHAS budget and its proposed adjustments will cease DMHAS from providing the essential services people in recovery like myself rely on dearly in order to thrive out in the community with a meaningful life without having to be incarcerated or institutionalized.

For me, I feel DMHAS is an essential part of my life nowadays because I know it is a safe place to be at with the countless people who I'm sure feel the same way to be able to talk with people who we know cares about us and see potential in us to live the life we want to.

As a person in recovery, I do depend on the services that DMHAS provides as one of the pillars holding up me throughout my life and can't imagine how it would be without that particular pillar with having experiencing both sides of talk therapy through a hearing and deaf therapist.

Without DMHAS, I can't even to imagine where I would be right at this moment other than sitting in front of you this evening talking about my story which never ceases to amaze me with the journey I have taken over the years coming forward and going forward as well.

I'm currently working in the peer services field to give back what I have received and am getting as well to show the clients I work with they have potential which I know is hard for them to see and enable them to live the life they want to.

In addition to working in the peer services field for almost 7 years ongoing, I'm a certified Recovery Support Specialist (RSS) state-wide and the only deaf one that I know of. Many non-profits relies on grants to be able to provide the services they do and gives their all to transforming countless people's lives for the best including mine.
In summation, DMHAS is a vital part to people in recovery like myself and I'm asking you to be able to let DMHAS keep essential services ongoing by maintaining its proposed budget which I know can be hard but hope you can find it in your heart to do this.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak and share my (lived) experience with you about what this would mean to me, my family and people I care about!

Andrew Kellogg

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