February 28, 2019

Good afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Formica, Representative Lavielle and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

I am here to comment on H.B. 7148 An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June Thirtieth, 2021, and Making Appropriations Therefor.

Please protect and fully fund essential community services. Community nonprofits improve our quality of life, making Connecticut a better place to live and work.

Since I was 14 I have struggled with substance use and mental health issues as it was part of my family. Following this life style left me homeless for years, beat up so bad I endured a traumatic brain injury and many years in prison. I went to over 10 different programs before I found Perception House. I actually went through their residential program three different times- this program saved my life. Thankfully they took me back that one last time- as it truly saved my life. This time I chose to really accept their help and work the program. After graduating the program in December I went Perception Programs outpatient clinic and I see a therapist every other week. I also moved into Perception Programs Recovery House in Willimantic. I finally have a place to call home – I have my own key and feel safe!

So my basic message is please fund and expand funding to these types of programs as everyone needs a chance to live a clean and safe life.

We appreciate that in the face of another difficult budget year Governor Lamont has sought to limit the budget impact on people served by my, and other, nonprofits.

But after so many years of difficult budgets, there is more to do and we are here to ask you to build upon the Governor’s proposals.

As you know, more than half of the state budget comprises “fixed costs” which are not subject to cuts. That percentage grows each year, and we appreciate the Governor’s tackling those costs.

But funding for nonprofits is in whatever remains. The combination of ongoing budget shortfalls and growing fixed costs mean community nonprofits are a shrinking piece of a diminishing pie.

Sincerely,

John Bobko
Resident of Willimantic