Good Evening Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Committee, my name is Aislin Green and I am a Licensed Master of Social Work at Hartford Behavioral Health. I have worked at HBH for about six years now, but I have been in this line of work for almost 20 years. I am here tonight to testify about how important funding for mental and behavioral health services in Connecticut is, especially for communities like Hartford, which usually need these kinds of services the most.

I am single mother of two sons. Despite having my LMSW, a professional degree, I still need to work three (3) different jobs to be able to provide for myself and my sons. In my role as a mental health worker at HBH I am exhausted. I see clients back to back to back without any time in between to gather my notes and my composer. The heavy case load leaves me feeling like I am letting my clients down because I have no time to give them the personal attention and care that they deserve. If mental health services in Connecticut were to be properly funded my agency would be able to pay me enough so that I would not have to work 3 different jobs and it would allow them to maintain quality clinicians and not have the high turnover rate that we currently have.

I am also a delegate with District 1199, and in my role, I interact with my brothers and sisters that deliver mental health services in the public sector. Many times, the discussion about funding turns into a conversation about saving money through the privatization of public sector mental health care. I love my job and the work I do, but I have to work THREE jobs to make ends meet. This is not something that should happen. Our state should be funding ALL services properly, so that the people that need the services the most, typically vulnerable populations in large urban areas, have choices and can get quality care no matter how they are getting the services.

Thank you for your time.