Hi, my name is Danielle Guy. Since July of 2018, I was hired as an Advocate for Disabilities Network of Eastern Connecticut in Norwich, CT. One of the 5 Independence Living Centers in Connecticut that I am proud to work for.

I am here today to speak as a deaf advocate, and why the increase budget would be beneficial to our agency to help/and support the deaf people in need of more services that are lacking because of severe communication barriers and staffing with signing skills.

Back in September of 2018. I received a phone call from a deaf lady with brain injuries who resided with her sister. She was delighted to have a deaf advocate on board and asked for help. We looked/and applied for assistance living homes for her to live independently on her own was her dream desire. The waiting list was long. She had been waiting for 3 years. We tried to have a proper brain injuries re-evaluation assessment for her with an interpreter to see if she might qualify some sort of waivers due to her injuries. Finding an interpreter was a big issue causing to rescheduling her appointments. It had increased her stress, anxiety/and isolation. Unfortunately, the consumer could not stay here and has decided to move to Michigan where she would be able to get better services for her needs than she would get in Connecticut.

Back in November of 2018. I worked with a deaf gentleman, his car broke down and needed a vehicle to get himself to work. He independently on his own went to the car dealership to purchase a vehicle. At the time, he thought he was getting a good deal but because of the lack of communications was not accessible and the dealership had readily taken advantage of him. This could be prevented if the community had been more educated about the deaf community with mental health issues.

Am currently advocating for a deaf elderly woman who resides in a nursing home. She does not have communication accessible available for her nor has had an interpreter yet upon residing at the facility since November of 2018. She does not understand why she is there, and why she can’t go back home. With this is because of lack of communications not being provided to her. I have been advocating for her needs to be more involved and to know her rights. Nursing facilities are not educated and needs to be educated more about the deaf.

As a deaf advocate, and myself being deaf. It is my duty to help those in need and to help better our deaf community. Please restore our funding. Thank you.

Danielle Guy, Advocate