

Gentlemen,

I am unable to attend Tuesday's public hearing but want to give testimony.

My name is Susan Tuz. I am a survivor of a mental health crisis and know first hand the value of the mental health services supplemented by DMHAS funding in our state.

In the mid-1980s, I had a nervous breakdown and entered a severe depression that lasted for several years. I was not able to function in society, hold a job or interact with people. It was through working with mental health professionals at Behavioral Health Services in New Milford, CT that I recovered.

Today I am a published book author, have a professional career and serve as Vice Chairman on the Housatonic Mental Health Council. I represent the town of New Milford on the council.

Since the Sandy Hook Elementary School shootings I have heard it said repeatedly on the news that we need better mental health care in our country, that new mental health laws and services must be put in place.

I would argue that the mental health services we need in Connecticut are in place. However, they have been underfunded for years, causing staffing cuts and causing staff to leave for better paying jobs.

The recent rescission of DMHAS funding cuts by the governor and the legislature were an excellent start in rectifying this situation, and I thank all involved for making those important decisions.

But I also urge a reinvestment in DHMAS funding in the coming and future budget cycles. For the past three years that I have served on the Housatonic Mental Health Council I have seen DMHAS funding repeatedly cut. This is a trend that has to stop.

A change in reporting requirements for psychiatrists and therapists is also called for. I understand that in NY State there is a requirement that if such a mental health professional is treating a client who exhibits as a threat to society and others, that professional is required to report that fact to the appropriate state agency.

I hope you will take all of my thoughts into consideration.

Thank you for the important job that you are doing.

Sincerely,

Susan Tuz

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