

Max Barrows
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Good Afternoon.

My name is Max Barrows

I live in the sticks of Worcester. I am a person with a disability and I get developmental services. I work 25 hours a week as a peer advocate supporting other people with developmental disabilities. When I was in high school I worked washing dishes at a number of local restaurants. When I graduated, I got employment services and I was able to get a real job, a professional job as a peer advocate. Without employment support services, I would be back in a dish pit.

People with disabilities are very pleased that the Governor put money in Developmental Services for new people. We need new money because less than 30% of the people who are eligible for Developmental Services receive them. The money for new services is used for people in a crisis. They may be living with their family who no longer can provide support. Some of the money for new services also goes to people like me who are out of high school need support services to work.

I wish a few members of the appropriations committees could spend just one day reviewing funding proposals for new services. You would get a true sense of how tragic some of the crisis situations are. Believe me, there is a need for these new services.

The Governor made a good decision to add new service money for developmental Services. However, we are concerned the governor's

budget has \$1.9 million in cuts for people with disabilities who are currently receiving them. Developmental Services have been cut 6 times since 2009. Once again the state is reducing services for people who already get them, to give to people who are in crisis or graduating from high school. It is like robbing Peter to pay Paul. We should change our priorities so that ALL people get the services they need to live with dignity, respect, and independence. Thanks for your time.