

Hello, my name is Sarah and I am proud to say I was born and raised in Vermont. I am a clinical graduate Social Work Student at Boston College and am interning at HCRS. People often ask me why social work? The short version is because I believe I embody the values and ethics of Social Work. Which is to promote Social Justice and Equality. So this is why I stand before you today; to advocate for those that need it most.

I will be graduating in May with thousands of dollars in debt, living in a small apartment with my dog. I will show up at my new job day after day carrying the weight of others sorrows, their triumphs and tragedies, and their life changing moments. I will give 110 percent of myself. I will do my part. Now, I am asking you to do your part.

We need to create a paradigm shift in the mental health services particularly in Community Mental Health to better support a severely under resourced system of care. I have been in the mental health field for about 8 years now and I have seen my fair share of under qualified staff members working with our most vulnerable populations. I have seen time and time again great clinicians become burnt out and leave their jobs. This is why I am proposing an increase in pay for mental health workers, like myself, and higher expectations for recruitment. Workers like myself who have lived in the state their whole lives and want to support this community should not have to go to other states where the compensation rates are higher. We need stable, qualified, well-trained and experienced workers to truly make an impact.

So when you are making your final budget decisions for 2020 please think of the recent graduates like myself who are in debt up to our ears, full of knowledge and eager to help; we are a force to be reckoned with. Think of us when you are deciding on increasing compensation and recruiting experienced workers. We will do our part and ask that you do your part.