

## Theresa Utton-Jerman

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**Subject:** Mental health budget

To whom this may concern,

I am writing in reference to the mental health issues we have not only through the entire u.s , but ALSO to Bennington county. As you are aware bennington county is overloaded with mental illness that show in many forms. From mild cases to violent crimes, to suicide, and addiction that leads to multiple drug over doses and death. I am saddened by the budget and these people left out. In our normal world with out covid we have long wait lists for people to seek health care due to mental illness. We have people who do not have coping skills and mental illness untreated causes serious lack of judgement. People need help especially now. I have severe depression and panic disorder. I am treated and I go to therapy (zoom). Without this I would not be improving. It took me months on a waiting list. During those months I am a mother of two and a girlfriend. I dont know if you have personal sexperience with mental health but im telling you trying to function with the way the world is with no childcare and homeschooling no outlet with anxiety panic disorder and depression is extremely hard and dark and lonely.

The Bennington police has submitted an article to the bennington banner wanting change with our mental health system and the way the police interact with mental illness. I am appauled to have read there is not budget for this important matter. A man who was not receiving care for schizophrenia murdered a young mom in broad day light last month because the voices told him it was murder time. Three other young adults have passed away because they over dosed on drugs because they needed to cope with mental illness. Every day there is a person who is contemplating and attempting suicide. These things have gotten worse in our small town since the virus has removed our outlets. Support groups for mental illness within our town depleted and programs are lacking.

The governor has not taken into consdieration the seriousness of this matter. Or he would have put a budget and money for this matter. He spoke about the importance of mental health and to take care of your mental health in december of 2020. I will quote the article written by Lisa Rathke in the AP news written on Dec 4, 2020:

Vermonters urged to take care of mental health

By LISA RATHKE

December 4, 2020

Gov. Phil Scott on Friday urged Vermonters to take care of their mental health, seek help if needed and to check in on others during the coronavirus pandemic, which Scott called “among the most stressful events” most people have endured in his lifetime.

“It’s been so prolonged and we don’t know when it will end,” he said at his biweekly virus briefing. “It’s forced us to be physically and emotionally separated from the people closest to us, those we typically rely on during challenging times.

How can the governor "urge vermonters to seek help" but yet not included resources in a budget. He is saying he cares and it is important with words, but absolutely nothing with his actions. Aka budget. If this doesnt change your mind about adding a budget for mental health patients then do you even care about Vermonters?

In governors scott address to the budget he stated ""We must make smart investments with this one-time money," he said. "It will not be available next year."

Isn't being smart starting with issues as he addressed in Dec 4th article of mental health. If we do not give opportunity for a budget to help the people now and "be smart" now, then next year when "it will not be available." We will have more crime, more deaths, and more problems.

The governor has said so many times how much Vermonters mean to him and how we need to love and support Each other.

He stated "We must support our communities, children, businesses and healthcare system; care for our neighbors; and lead a recovery that reaches every county and brings equal economic opportunity to every Vermonter."

In order to meet what he has stated he wants we need a budget so that people have chance for Recovery, on one self. We need to focus on mental illness "recovery that reaches every county. "

This is a serious matter and I urge you to follow through with what was said and deemed important. People need action not words. Show us that we matter by building a budget for mental health in order for us to care for our neighbors we need you to care for us, so we can care for us and then spread the love to our neighbors. With out self care we can not care about others.

Thank you

Whitney Gregory

Bennington county