

COPY 8 of 10

John L. Taylor  
201 W. Pearl St.  
Apt. #2  
Ishpeming, MI, 49849  
Phone: (906) 236-3227  
E-mail: [knightrainstrike@yahoo.com](mailto:knightrainstrike@yahoo.com)

Ladies and Gentlemen, I have come here today to testify on the necessity of increasing Michigan's Community Mental Health (CMH) providers general funds not as a lobbyist, or a concerned citizen, but as a recipient of this vital service who has seen too many of my fellow citizens struggle with mental illness and slip through the cracks. Due to lack of general fund dollars for our local Community Mental Health provider, Pathways, I have watched dozens of people in my neighborhood face this great and terrifying struggle alone and untreated. Every day, on the bus into Marquette, I see people with known and diagnosed mental illnesses who have lost services or don't qualify due to lack of Medicaid and insufficient general fund dollars to keep them on the caseload. But one person stands out in my mind. She tells people her name is Daisy. She is a teenager who often sits at the back of the bus and wears a short skirt that reveals about twenty five self-inflicted cuts on her leg, which constitute her way of coping with depression. It breaks my heart when Daisy gets on the bus, because every time there more cuts, but no treatment. I fear someday she won't occupy that seat at the back of the bus anymore, or any other seat for that matter, because she was screaming for help but no one could afford to care. Daisy isn't the only heartbreak I see on the bus. So many others need treatment they know they cannot receive, and self-medicate with whiskey, or meth, or razor blades. Ladies and Gentlemen, I have come here, which is a long way from where the bus routes end, to plead with you to make a difference in the lives of people who wake up each day to the terrifying reality that their mind is not totally their own. This may not be a national disaster, but it is an endless stream of minor tragedies that you have the power to prevent by increasing general fund dollars for the Community Mental Health system. By your coming here today, you have demonstrated your interest their plight. I have come here to implore you, let interest become action, action that can save lives and money. The costs of counseling and medications are acceptable

compared to the cost of untreated mental illness leading to tragedy, private or public. I leave you with this thought, Ladies and Gentlemen; I myself am on disability. I have a form of Autism that was formerly called Asperger's Syndrome and a mood disorder, not otherwise specified. My diagnosis is nearly identical to that of Adam Lanza, the Newtown school shooter, and as a teenager I experienced a similar degree of social isolation. Yet I stand here today, sane and calm. The difference is treatment. I am living proof it works. I ask you to give my fellow citizens who are not Medicaid recipients the chance I have been given to live a productive life in this great state. I cannot make this decision for you. I could barely even find this meeting, much less influence it. But I tell you, Ladies and Gentlemen, funding the Community Mental Health system's general funds is a worthy use of your budget.

Thank you for your consideration.

John L. Taylor, June 2013