

**Ohio Senate Finance Committee**  
**House Bill 33**  
**Interested Party Testimony - Alizsha McCown**  
**May 25, 2023**

Chair Dolan, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Sykes and members of the Senate Finance Committee. My name is Alizsha McCown and I am here today to testify as an Interested Party on House Bill 33, the state biennial budget bill. As both a member of the ADAMH Board of Franklin County's Community Advocacy Council and a person in long-term recovery, I am concerned with many of the proposed funding cuts in the House-passed version of House Bill 33 for behavioral health services.

ADAMH Boards play an integral role in addressing the mental health and addiction recovery needs across communities. If it was not for the ADAMH Board of Franklin County, I do not know if I would be here alive standing in front of you all today. The services I received through CompDrug, which is funded by the ADAMH Board, saved my life. I had hit my rock bottom, having been arrested and served time in jail. I was uninsured and did not have access to reliable transportation, but I knew that I needed to turn my life around. After being connected with CompDrug, they were able to arrange my transportation to ensure I could attend my counseling sessions. And it is because of those services, I stand here today 13 years sober, in the process to become a peer support specialist because I want to help and show others that recovery is possible. However, I fear that the proposed funding cuts to the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services would hurt our state's ability to meet the existing and growing demand for behavioral health services for our state's most vulnerable residents.

Currently, the House-passed version of House Bill 33 decreases the total amount of money in the Continuum of Care line item, which is the largest investment allocated to ADAMH Boards to fund services in their community. It also increases the amount of items dedicated to specific programs and projects, ultimately resulting in less dollars allocated to ADAMH Boards. I am asking you to please restore the as-introduced funding amount in the Continuum of Care line item to ensure ADAMH Boards receive at least the same amount of funding as years past. In addition, I hope that the Senate considers restoring funding to the Hospital Services, Criminal Justice Services, Residential State Supplement, and Prevention and Wellness line items that were cut in the House-passed budget.

Chair Dolan and members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today. I hope you will consider restoring funding to these critical community services so that more individuals like me can be given the chance to live a life of recovery. At this time, I am happy to answer any questions you may have.