

Steven Sepe

From: Melissa Bubble <mm.bubble@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 10, 2025 11:52 AM
To: House Health and Human Services Committee
Subject: Testimony on House Bill H 6117

Hello My name is Melissa Bubble,

Many of the people I support are facing housing instability, often living out of their cars or bouncing between temporary shelters while trying to keep their families together. They're overwhelmed, having been turned away from multiple agencies, and the emotional toll is heavy—especially on their children. As a Community Health Advocate, I step in to connect them with immediate relief, such as warming shelters, hygiene services, and access to educational support for their kids. I assist with pre-screening housing options so families can focus on work and school while still making progress toward stability. I also provide access to mental health resources and help families maintain a sense of normalcy, even in tough times—whether that's supporting a child's opportunity to attend prom or connecting them with community-based programs for long-term support. While their situations may remain difficult, they no longer feel alone. They know someone is advocating with them every step of the way.

Community Health Workers are the backbone of our neighborhoods—we help the moms, dads, uncles, aunts, friends, or Neighbors and even the person you pass in the grocery store or at the bus stop. Sometimes hiding all of this behind their smile, secretly worrying about the next day or if they can eat. They can even be our co-workers! We are the safety net for people when life becomes overwhelming.

I know this personally, because I've been there. A few years ago, I lost a career I had built over 13 years. It was devastating. I went from being secure and self-sufficient to feeling completely lost. I was turned away from state services four times before finally becoming eligible. During that time, bills piled up, utility companies threatened shutoffs, and I was told my cell phone would be disconnected. My kids wanted healthy food, but I could no longer afford it. I'll never forget standing at the checkout line at a grocery store and realizing I didn't have enough money. I had to put \$50 worth of groceries—items my kids needed to eat—back on the shelf, right in front of the cashier. Do you know how embarrassing that is? How much it hurt? And how hard it was to explain to my kids why we were leaving without the food they picked out?

That moment broke me—but it also built the fire in me to become the person I once needed. That's why I do this work now. As a Community Health Advocate, I show up every day so no one I serve ever has to feel that helpless and alone. I make sure they are seen, heard, and supported—because I remember what it was like to have none of that.

Thank you!

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