

committee members might remember that last fall where we had the department come in and their problem is such that they are woefully underfunded right now and have waiting lists for services in the regional centers, in the community based programs and would really need an increase in funding to even begin to approach the demand that they are facing. And if we have taken a step of restoring the funding for these other DPI related functions, it does make sense to me to do that as well for the community based mental retardation program funding. We have got, as most of you know, hundreds of people waiting to get into these services. We have individuals that graduate out of the special education programs that are mandatorily provided for in our school system. They end with that mandated age of 21 and then they find they have to wait years to get into a community based program to continue to receive services. Those individuals have come before our committee and talked to us about the problem that they have, having developed skills over the years in the special ed. programs and then having to wait and lose those skills over a period of time and then having to struggle to find their identity in our society. These individuals that have developmental disabilities have a desire to work, have a desire to function in our community, have a desire to achieve the most they can achieve and we have them waiting for years to get into services. Another example, we've got...I know of a mother who called me who had an individual, a son who she and her husband had been taking care of who is older, they were older, and had been taking care of him in their home for a long, long time. It turned out that the father had become slightly physically disabled and it was difficult for him to handle their son who is now in his thirties I believe. At the same time the mother suddenly had come down with an ailment, a brain tumor as it turns out, and was going into the hospital for surgery and called my office to say, please, help me. I cannot take care of my son any longer. My husband is disabled, unable to take care of his son, can we find a way to get him into a community based program? He has been number two on the list for a long time and I'm sure it won't be long before he can get in if they can just help us in this emergency. So we called the regional office to say what's happening here, can you please review it, can you get back to us, and they said, yes, this person has been for three years number two on their waiting list and so, yes, he is a high priority, but we haven't placed him yet. And then the question is, well how many more years before you think you'll find a placement? And they said well we think maybe in three more years we'll find something. In other words,