

Good morning -- *Chair and members of the committee.*

My name is Kurtis N. Mayne and I am the Assistant Director of Services -Community Employment at Opportunity Resources Inc. My organization currently provides Extended Employment Services to more than 80 individuals each year. Nearly 70 of those individuals are long term employees of ORI. They most likely would not be employed without Extended Employment services. Because these folks are working they are contributing individuals of our community, earning a living, volunteering and giving back, paying their bills, contributing to the tax base, spending money at our local stores and businesses, not to mention the self respect all people get from working. If funding for Extended Employment services are cut, people will lose jobs, no question. A cut in Extended Employment means earnings will decrease and spending will decrease. Contributions to the tax base will decrease, BUT what people often times do not think of is the immeasurable increased expense of people needing assistance such as food stamps, housing assistance, medical needs, the issues that come with homelessness, increased potential for crime and violence, and other crisis based services.

I see firsthand, every single day, in the lives of hundreds of people a year how the Extended Employment Program helps people gain and maintain employment and the way it helps individuals on a daily basis and our community as a whole.

I am asking you today to support all Extended Employment funding currently in place and to make NO cuts to this program.

Thank you for your time and commitment to our great state.

