



January 19, 2023

Honorable Chairman Rick Ladd
House Education Committee
Legislative Office Building 205-207
33 North State Street, Concord, NH, 03301

RE: NAMI NH Support for HB 45

Dear Chairman and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Sam Hawkins, and I am the Public Policy Assistant at NAMI NH, the National Alliance on Mental Illness. NAMI NH is a non-profit, grassroots organization whose mission is to improve the lives of all people impacted by mental illness and suicide through support, education and advocacy. On behalf of NAMI NH, I am writing today to speak in favor of HB 45, establishing a committee to study student loan forgiveness in New Hampshire.

New Hampshire, like many other states in the country, is amidst a debilitating workforce shortage. Our systems of care simply can't keep up, and our most vulnerable populations are feeling the consequences. Mental healthcare has been especially impacted, leaving overworked professionals stranded in a mental health crisis with no end in sight.

Student loan forgiveness programs have the power to address this crisis by providing individuals the freedom to pursue the education necessary to join these professions, and by drawing new students and professionals to our state. Studying the various possible programs and finding the best fit for our state is an important first step to revitalizing our workforce and enabling our health systems to provide their life-altering care. For these reasons, NAMI NH urges the committee vote to recommend ought to pass for HB 45.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Samuel C. Hawkins". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Samuel C. Hawkins