[Some ideas for a script to use when you call your legislator. Remember, you are likely to talk with their aide. That is fine. The key is to be calm and straightforward. They want to hear from their constituents!]

Hello,

I'm a constituent of [Senator/Representative] _____ calling to urge the [senator/representative] **to reject the cuts to the Department of Mental Health's Children, Youth and Families services in the Governor's proposed FY26 budget and restore the appropriation to the FY25 funding levels.**

The cuts proposed will have a devastating effect on the mental health of children, youth, and families who are already struggling to find help. The cuts include:

- Closing half of the adolescent Intensive Residential Treatment Program beds in the state, including the only gender inclusive program, when the need is great but the process has been flawed.
- Closing the only age 6-12 Intensive Residential Treament Program in the state. Where will these kids go?
- Significantly cutting DMH Flex and PACT-Y services that help keep children and youth in their homes and communities and out of hospitals and group care. This includes cutting the successful Emergency Department diversion services.
- Eliminating 50% of DMH caseworkers for children, youth and families. There aren't enough already.
- Closing the Pocassett Mental Health Center - the only DMH psychiatric hospital on the Cape.

Since COVID, the need and acuity for appropriate mental health services has dramatically increased while access to such services has declined. For families (like mine), DMH is **not** the solution of first resort. It is our (their) **last hop**e in a long line of disappointments for our children and families. If DMH doesn't help, who will?

[insert your family's story or professional story - as briefly as possible]

I urge you to protect children, youth and families in your community and across the state by restoring funding for DMH to FY25 levels. Thank you for your service and dedication to the residents of the Commonwealth of MA, especially the children and families.
Will you champion this cause for us?

[END]