

# Protesters decry Romney's latest mental health cuts

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**BOSTON.** Despite recently restoring some of the budget cuts he made last month, Gov. Mitt Romney met opposition yesterday at the State House in the form of social service providers and those affected by the cuts still in place.

Roughly 1,000 demonstrators packed Beacon Street, surrounding a giant inflatable rat designed to mimic Romney, and later gathered inside the State House to pledge to fight his \$425 million in budget cuts made Nov. 10.

"These cuts are going to kill my community," said Catherine Gaynes, a member of the HIV/AIDS Statewide Consumer Advisory Board, and an HIV sufferer. "He must restore the HIV line item. Please, save our lives."

Romney eliminated \$735,000 in funding for AIDS prevention, treatment and services, part of the cuts made to more than 400 state programs. Six of the programs were given at least a partial restoration of their cuts last week.

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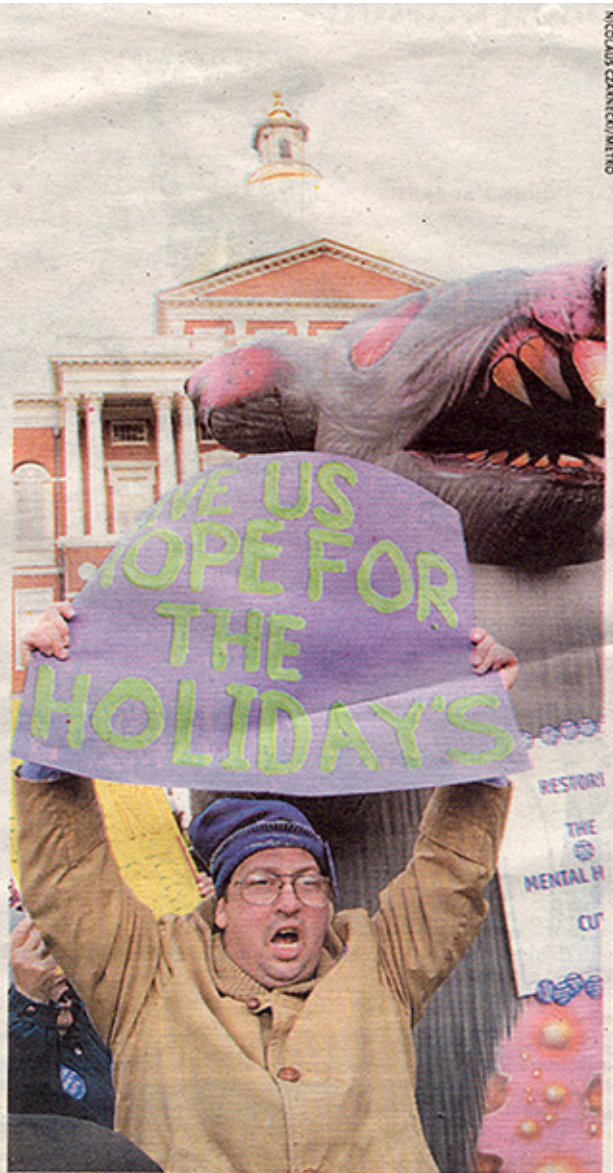
Catherine Gaynes

That left many still struggling to make ends meet.

"We were already working with less money than we need," said Renee Raboin, residential counselor at Vinfen, an organization aiding those with mental and developmental disabilities.

With just four weeks remaining before he leaves office, Romney insists the moves were not done to improve his presidential resume — as many have asserted — but rather depart with the budget in shape.

"Every line item in the budget has a strong constituency, but someone needs to take a look at the larger picture and make sure the budget is balanced," said Romney's spokesman, Eric Fehrstrom. "Fiscal discipline has been a hallmark of Gov. Romney's administration, and he intends on maintaining it until his last day in office."



NICHOLAS GRANICCO/MITTO

Holding a sign saying "Give us hope for the holidays," George Tooney, of Dennisport, who is being affected by Gov. Mitt Romney's recent budget cuts, rallies in front of the State House yesterday.