



Kathleen Earnes from Charlestown, who works in health care and is a mother of a veteran, holds up a sign at a rally for the middle class at Broad Street Park in Claremont yesterday afternoon.

PAUL HOWE PHOTO

# Locals rally over proposed cuts

By CRAIG LYONS  
Staff Writer

Nita Hopkins has struggled with bipolar disorder since she was 15 and finally aligned herself with a support system at West Central Behavior Health in Claremont — until both her therapist and psychiatrist lost their jobs.

"What am I supposed to do now?" Hopkins asked yesterday during a demonstration at Broad Street Park in

Claremont to protest proposed cuts in state funding to human services like mental health programs.

Fortunately, Hopkins said, she's found other places to turn so she gets the support. But, she added, it's not fair she had to lose the support that made her feel the best she has in years.

Her support systems were a part of cutbacks at West Central, and the agency continues to brace itself for further cuts due to the state budget that's being considered in

the state legislature today.

The status of the budget and the possibility of cuts led Hopkins and about 15 other people to stand in Broad Street Park yesterday afternoon to protest.

"I just shake my head that saving money comes on the backs of the old, the sick, the students and other people I believe the state should protect," said Bill Hopkins, Nita's husband.

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## CLAREMONT

# McGoodwin P to rely on stuc approach to po

By CRAIG LYONS  
Staff Writer

Middleton McGoodwin says he'll rely on a more studious approach as he prepares to take over as the next SAU 6 superintendent, rather than saying he'll hit the ground running.

When someone tries to hit the ground running, McGoodwin said during a phone interview yesterday, it's not uncommon to miss the mark.

"I n s t e a d," McGoodwin said he's first going to do his research, hit the ground and get acclimated with the three communities in the SAU. Though, he added, that shouldn't take very long.

"Then off we go," McGoodwin said.

McGoodwin, 64, is getting ready to wrap up his tenure at the Marshfield Public School in Massachusetts at the end of the month and head to SAU 6. The SAU 6 School Board announced Monday it hired McGoodwin to replace Superintendent Jacqueline Guilletta.

He said he plans to assume his new role by the end of



MCGOODWIN

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# LOCAL NEWS

## RALLY FROM PAGE A1

Yesterday's rally was hosted by Working Families Win and was one of several gatherings held around the state prior to the legislative session today and throughout the next week, protesting not only the proposed state budget but also urging senators and representatives to uphold the governor's veto of the Right-to-Work Bill. Today the legislature will review and vote on the proposed \$10.2 billion budget.

The middle class and low-income people are under attack in this budget, said Jamie Contois, state director for Working Families Win N.H., because it reduces funding for social services and leaves a lot of people out of work.

"The budget does so much to gut critical services," Contois said. At the same time cuts are being considered, she said, the legislature wants to decrease the cigarette tax by 10 cents, a hit that would reduce the state's revenue by nearly \$15 million.

Even the Right-to-Work Bill hurts people, said Contois, because it could result in lower wages, fewer benefits and less safety regulation in the workplace.

"There are options," Contois said. "These are choices." Pat Kinne of West Central Behavior Health said she's concerned about the reduction in services to the Department of Health and Human Services and mental health providers.

West Central previously absorbed cuts, said Kinne, and are potentially looking at more. The agency already closed three programs, she said.

"In the long run these cuts are going to cost the counties and the state more money," according to Kinne.

The budget cuts weren't the only thing on the minds of the people who gathered in Broad Street Park yesterday.

Larry Converse, a former member of the Paperworkers Union and past president of the Sullivan County AFL-CIO, said the Right-to-Work Bill undermines labor unions because it takes away a portion of the dues the groups use to operate.

Criticisms that the union dues help fund political action efforts aren't true, said Converse. He said he's worked plenty of fundraisers to support political efforts to know that.

Similar legislation has been successfully fought in the past, said Converse. But as more business people were elected, he added, the bill advanced further this session.

"Usually, it doesn't get this far and it did this time," Converse said.



PAUL HOWE PHOTO

Nita Hopkins from Charlestown holds up a sign at a rally for the middle class at Broad Street Park in Claremont yesterday afternoon.