

Good afternoon, Chairs, Senators and Representatives. My name is Nurys De la Cruz and I am a resident of New Haven. For many years when my family and I needed the most help, Junta for Progressive Action, Inc. was always there to offer a helping hand and help me and my family become self-sufficient.

In 1991, I found myself unemployed partly due to the lack of knowledge of the English language. I had moved here from Puerto Rico to join my family. The services I received from Junta at the time included: English classes, computer classes, coats for my children and food for my family.

In 1995, I was grateful to be employed by the New Haven Board of Education as a kindergarten bilingual teacher assistant. Let it be known that without the help I received in Junta's English classes and their other services, this may not have been possible.

This year I celebrate 14 years working with the New Haven Board of Education. Throughout the years, I have come across hundreds of families who are in need and I refer them to Junta. I'm familiar with families who receive educational/GED classes, diapers, holiday food baskets, tax preparation and financial education and free legal assistance.

Junta for Progressive Action, Inc. is a blessing to the community and to those who need direction and help towards self-sufficiency. Not only do they still offer the services that I mentioned, they also offer diapers to families that can't afford them, GED classes, Tax Preparation during tax season, child care for parents taking night classes, after-school program; The Neighborhood Place, and two summer camps. These are just a few of the services that they offer the community, and all these services are free of charge.

If Junta for Progressive Action, Inc. can't continue to service our community like it has done for the last 40 years it would be devastating. Thousands of lives are better due to services offered at Junta. Because of Junta my life and this community is better.