Testimony of Lourdes Burgos
In support of funding for Greater Hartford Legal Aid, Inc.
February 23, 2009

Good evening. My name is Lourdes Burgos and I am testifying on behalf of Greater Hartford Legal Aid. I spent many years in DCF foster care. When I was a teenager, I had a baby, which DCF took away from me immediately. Luckily, legal aid represented me. My lawyer convinced DCF to see my strengths, and got DCF to reunite my baby and me in the St. Agnes Home. Later, after my daughter's father abused me, legal aid convinced DCF not to terminate my parental rights, but to give me extra help instead. When my baby and I had difficulties in later foster homes, legal aid made sure DCF placed me in a better home, and made sure I had the help I needed to be a better parent. This included financial help, which I used to go to college.

Now, I have three beautiful children, a college degree, a career in education, a stable home and a wonderful partner. Just when I did not have any hope and even DCF was against me, legal aid was able to help me. They impacted my life in such a positive way. There are a lot of people like me that need legal services and cannot afford them. Legal services helps people accomplish their goals, like keeping their children and their homes, being safe, and going to school. So please do not eliminate any more funding from legal aid. There has to be a way that we could work together.