

## Keva Peterson's Testimony before the Judiciary Committee

I went to New Haven Legal Assistance for help because my ex-husband took me to court. I couldn't let him visit with the children after he sexually assaulted my daughter. Attorney Sheila Hayre got the police to listen to what my daughter was saying and arrest my ex-husband. During this time, Sheila was wonderful and very attentive. She told me what was going to happen so I didn't have to go into it not knowing what could happen. She worked very hard at keeping my kids safe from a predator, my ex-husband. If I was upset, she would just tell me "breathe" and she would listen. She told me that we were not going to give up and that it was going to be okay. Sheila worked hard to make sure this was a success story: I got sole custody and my ex-husband could not visit with the children while the criminal case against him was going on.

Another Attorney, Shelley White, made sure that the housing authority put me and my family in a safe, decent apartment. Shelley was not going to settle for anything less because me and the kids were going through so much. The housing authority had moved us to a place that had bedbugs, and to a place that was infested with mold, mildew and sewage backing up. Shelley made sure me and the kids had a proper place to stay. I felt like with her by my side, my kids and I were going to get everything we needed. I wasn't scared because she was on it.

I had been having problems with the housing authority for years and had also tried to deal with the court before. But my experience with New Haven Legal Assistance has been wonderful; they really put their heart into it. It makes me believe that life isn't horrible. That's what we need in this world – we can deal with a tragedy and turn it into a success story because legal aid goes above and beyond. Without them I don't know where me and my kids would have been.

Keva Peterson