

Appropriations Committee – March 3, 2011
Judicial Branch Budget – Legal Aid funding

Testimony of Lorilee Gioia

I am testifying in support of funding for the legal services program.

Several years ago, I was trying to figure out how to keep my 10-year-old son and myself safe from my husband. He was using drugs, he was hurting me, and was getting increasingly violent.

My son and I fled our home and began to work with the Susan B Anthony domestic violence program in Torrington. They knew that I needed court orders to become safe, and they connected me to Connecticut Legal Services.

My court case became very complicated. My husband was breaking restraining orders, and not only was he stalking me, but he started stalking my legal aid lawyer. He was telling friends that he was going to "get me." Legal aid stood by me every step of the way. Through the court process and lots of determination from me and my lawyers, we were able to get court orders that finally started to calm things down.

Now, a few years later, I have a life that is independent and safe. I am driving a school bus for work, I am attending college online, and I expect to get my Bachelor's degree in Psychology next year. My husband's behavior is more under control, and my son has been having successful visits with him.

None of this would have been possible without the skill and determination of the people at Connecticut Legal Services. Please do everything you can to support their funding.

Thank you.