

TESTIMONY OF XIOMARA CAMPOS

BEFORE THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
Judicial Branch – Legal Aid funding

MARCH 3, 2011

My name is Xiomara Campos and I am an Adult Advocate, at New Horizons, which is a domestic violence program in Middletown, Connecticut. And I am here to support the funding and work of Connecticut Legal Services.

Every non-profit agency in Middletown turns to Connecticut Legal Services for the things our clients need that require a lawyer. They are an essential part of our service network, and when their funding is tight it is hard for us to get our work done.

I work most with a legal aid lawyer named Michael Burns, who handles family court cases in Middletown. Attorney Burns is a caring, honest and compassionate professional who strongly believe that every single individual needs a legal representation, especially the less fortunate.

A perfect example was a case of a mom (plus her child) who left her abusive husband, and came to our Domestic violence shelter, without any money, and weeks later she was served with divorce papers.

Thru the help of Legal Aid, our client was represented in court with her case, and thru the lawyer's representation and discovery, she ended up receiving more child support and alimony than what was suggested by the abusive defendants lawyer, and at the same time the alimony and child support was made retroactive since the family left home.

In the same case, the attorney from legal aid was able to get the court to appoint a lawyer for our client's child's best interest. As a result, visits between dad and child are supervised, which is needed to keep the child safe.

Also, because of legal aid's help our client was able to find out that her child's father had filed and gotten the deduction from the taxes because he lied and said that the child was with him. He was planning not to give any money from the taxes to our client, but because of the legal representation she got her money.

Our client is now receiving her weekly child support and alimony on time, giving her the opportunity to have her own place, live independently, and free of violence, things that she would not have been able to accomplish if Legal Aid was not working on her case.

This is the kind of work we do together every day to benefit low-income victims of domestic violence. Thank you for your support for legal aid, as well as your support for the domestic violence network.