

**Testimony of Jennifer Mitchell**  
**Health and Hospitals Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee**  
**February 22, 2012**

Good evening honorable senators and representatives, my name is Jennifer Mitchell and my address is 835 Montauk Avenue in New London.

I am a person in recovery – I have multiple physical and mental disabilities and I am here tonight to testify about the budget for the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. I want the budget to include money for Connecticut Legal Rights Project to protect and save people's housing.

I received rental assistance for 3 years through the Thames Valley Council for Community Action- TVCCA - my housing authority. I lost my rental assistance 2 years ago and was homeless a lot of the time since then, I have 4 children and they were homeless too. I did the best I could to keep their housing stable and made sure they stayed in school.

I found Connecticut Legal Rights Project on my own and Susan Aranoff- an attorney from Connecticut Legal Rights Project- filed an appeal on my behalf – and she fought for me to get my rental assistance back. We had 4 hearings and we finally won. My rental assistance was just restored and should be in place for March rent.

Without CLRP, I don't think I ever would have been able to get my rental assistance back. Without my assistance I would have to stay with friends or be homeless- I know what it's like to be homeless and I know it's hard—for someone like me with disabilities- and a family—it's really hard!

This was not the first time I had a problem with TVCCA- I am worried that if I have another problem—and CLRP is not there to help me- I will lose my housing. Please make sure CLRP has the money it needs to provide legal help for people like me—who will be homeless without their help.