

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

Good evening honorable senators and representatives, my name is Kathleen Mitchell and my address is 107 Pequot Ave, New London

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.

My daughter Jennifer Mitchell has multiple disabilities. Jennifer received rental assistance for 3 years through the Thames Valley Council for Community Action- TVCCA – her local housing authority. TVCCA terminated her rental assistance and she was evicted. When she lost her assistance- she and my four grandchildren stayed with me so they wouldn't be homeless. They also stayed with me when she used up the amount of time she could stay at the family shelter. At times, some of my grandchildren stayed with my other daughter in New York State. When Jennifer lost her rental assistance it affected my whole family.

I have been involved in local politics for years and I know a lot about the services and programs that help people in my community. Connecticut Legal Rights Project helped my daughter get her housing assistance back. Susan Aranoff- an attorney from Connecticut Legal Rights Project- filed several appeals on Jennifer's behalf and after 2 years of litigating, my daughter won her appeal and her rental assistance will start up again in March.

Without CLRP, I don't think my daughter would have been able to get back her rental assistance. This was not my daughter's first problem with TVCCA- I am worried that if she has any more problems in the future—and CLRP is not there to help her- she- and my grand children will again be homeless.

Please make sure CLRP has the money it needs to provide legal help for housing issues for people with disabilities- like my daughter- who will be homeless without their help.