

**Testimony of Yvonne Ortiz
Appropriations Committee
February 15, 2013**

Good evening honorable senators and representatives, my name is Yvonne Ortiz and I live at 77 Boulder Drive, New London CT and I have 3 school age children -- 5 year old daughter, a 6 year old son and a 14 year old son--

I am a person in recovery 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 was being evicted and was going to lose my housing assistance- and then someone from the housing authority connected me with Connecticut Legal Rights Project.

I didn't know my rights and had signed papers saying I would move by October 31st, when CLRP got involved they saw that my rights had been violated and they were able to get the case re-open and then thrown out of court.

The house I was living in has been in abatement for nearly a year- and also has been cited repeatedly by the city of New London health Department. Heat was supposed to be included and was not supplied at least 6 times this winter. There were a lot of safety problems too.

Because of the help I received from CLRP and TVCCA, I am now living in a safe- clean apartment in a neighborhood that is safe for my children and there is a playground for them out back.

Without CLRP, I probably would have been evicted- which would have made me lose my housing assistance.

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 might be homeless without their help.