

CONNECTICUT LEGAL RIGHTS PROJECT

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**TESTIMONY OF JAN VANTASSEL, ESQ.
GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE
March 25, 2013**

SUPPORT FOR SECTION ONE OF HB 6670

My name is Jan VanTassel, and I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Legal Rights Project, Inc. (CLRP). CLRP is a statewide non-profit organization that provides legal services to low income adults with psychiatric disabilities on matters related to their treatment, recovery and civil rights.

I am testifying today to support Section 1 of HB 6670, which deals with one of our clients' most fundamental rights, the right to vote. The purpose of this provision is to provide persons receiving services at state operated psychiatric hospitals with the same right to vote as persons receiving mental health services in a private facility. Specifically, this means that they would not need to be supervised by someone from the Registrar of Voters Office, which is required for "institutions."

DMHAS operated facilities provide the same services as private hospitals and there is no good reason why the individuals receiving services in these facilities should be treated differently when it comes to voting. This is a simple inequity that is caused by the broad definition of an institution currently in the statute.

I urge this committee to support section one and correct this discrepancy.

Thank you for your consideration.

**Spoken
3/25/13**