

**TESTIMONY OF JULIE HOAGLAND, PROGRAM MANAGER UNITED SERVICES IN
SUPPORT OF S.B.31, AN ACT CONCERNING CONTINUED DELIVERY OF LEGAL
SERVICES TO THE POOR**

My name is Julie Hoagland and I am the Program Manager for United Services in Danielson. My job is to provide programing services for the domestic violence programs in Windham County.

Connecticut Legal Services provides our clients with vital legal assistance. Such assistance includes restraining orders, divorces, custody orders, immigration, housing and benefits issues. CLS is a trusted resource for United Service and our clients. We rely on CLS to answer all sorts of legal and non legal questions. If CLS cannot answer a question they will refer us to someone who can.

Recently legal aid helped a client obtain a restraining order against her husband to protect herself and her children after he strangled her and then kicked her out of their apartment and attempted to take their child out of her arms in a public place. The CLS attorney also defended this client in the custody action that the husband filed as retaliation and helped her to apply under VAWA for immigration status so that she and her children could support themselves.

Another client from Guatemala met and subsequently married a man through an online dating site. Once in northeast Connecticut the man kept her a prisoner in this apartment. After she gave birth to their child he began beating her daily. It took her two years to call the domestic violence hotline for assistance. One of our advocates worked together with a CLS attorney to meet with the client in a safe place and to develop a

plan to safely file a restraining order and divorce once the client was in shelter. The CLS attorney represented the client in her divorce and helped the client to obtain support for herself and her child.

If CLS had not been available to help these clients they would not have been represented in court and it would have been difficult for them to navigate the legal system by themselves. It takes special training and understanding to work with victims of domestic violence and CLS attorneys are skilled in this area. CLS makes a difference for our community and our clients. I urge you to pass S.B. 31 to fund legal services.