

Testimony of Xiomara Campos, in Support of S.B. 31, an Act Concerning Continued Delivery of Legal Services to the Poor, March 10, 2014.

My name is Xiomara Campos , and I am an Adult Advocate at New Horizons, which is a Domestic Violence Services Program in Middletown, Connecticut. I am here on behalf of the clients that I serve and to support the funding and work of Connecticut Legal Services.

Most of our clients at New Horizons that are in need of legal representation do not have the financial capacity to hire a private lawyer, which is the reason Connecticut Legal Services is an essential part of our service network. When their funding is tight it is hard for us to get our work done.

One example of the work that Connecticut Legal Services provides involves a client who was denied benefits from the Department of Social Services, even though she was entitled to those benefits under the Violence Against Women Act, because of her domestic violence situation. The lawyer from Connecticut Legal Services was able to represent our client on this matter and help her receive benefits immediately. Also, benefits were retroactive to the date the application was submitted. Without legal aid advocacy this would not have been a positive outcome.

Another example is a referral made to Connecticut Legal Services of a woman married to a high powered officer, and living in the United States for a short period of time. In this case, with the representation of Connecticut Legal Services this individual was able to obtain a restraining order and alimony, and finally, her divorce. In addition, with help from legal services, she was able to self petition for legal status, which will help her maintain a safe, independent life. Without the assistance from the dedicated and compassionate lawyer from Connecticut Legal Services this individual would not have had the same results or the opportunity to live free from violence. Because of the collaborative efforts of New Horizons and legal services, she is no longer dependent on her abusive husband.

Those are just two of the examples of the kind of work New Horizons Domestic Violence and Connecticut Legal Services do together every day to benefit low income victims of domestic violence.