

TESTIMONY OF EVANGELINE SARGENT  
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
MARCH 6, 2015

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**OPPOSE \$450,000 (WITH RESCISSION) CUT TO DMHAS LEGAL SERVICES (CLRP) LINE ITEM**

**OPPOSE DPH CUTS TO SCHOOL BASED HEALTH CENTERS**

Good evening and thank you Committee Chairs. My name is Evangeline Sargent and am from Oakdale, CT. I am testifying tonight in opposition to certain cuts to the budget which I will get into detail as I go.

Conecticut Legal Rights Project (CLRP) was established in short, to protect the civil rights of Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) clients, both hospitalized and in the community. I am in opposition to the \$450,000.00 (including \$50,000.00 rescission) cut the Governor has made in the DMHAS budget for the legal services line item. That line item funds CLRP and making that cut will deeply affect CLRP. It will eliminate their housing advocacy and force deep layoffs. They will have to cut staffing almost in half. As a result, they will have to decrease their ability to represent clients.

Without CLRP, many DMHAS clients would have no place to turn to for help when it comes to their civil rights being violated. Some people would have no place to live due to unscrupulous landlords without CLRP. Knowing you have the wonderful people at CLRP there to help makes life all that better. You know that if someone tries to mess with your civil rights due to mental illness, you have someone to call. How would you feel if you didn't have that.

Please remember that it is more cost effective to keep someone housed than homeless. An emergency room visit is more expensive than keeping someone housed for a year (at least in supportive housing). If we loose CLRP's housing advocacy, people could loose their homes due to discrimination and end up homeless. CLRP is more than worth it.

CLRP also helps with advance directives, employment discrimination, and treatment rights. If they loose staff they won't be able to handle these cases. Clients need CLRP for help with all of this too.

Please do not take CLRP and any of their services away from us. We need them.

Also, the cuts in the budget for the school based health centers I am against. The centers have shown themselves to improve academic performance and provide critical services to children and young adults with behavioral health problems. They have also been recognized by task forces including the Sandy Hook Commission to do the providing of critical services that I already mentioned.

If I could only pick one though, I would say CLRP. Thank you for your time.