

**TESTIMONY OF ROBBYN SIBLEY
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
MARCH 6, 2015**

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 ROBBYN SIBLEY AND I AM FROM OAKDALE. I AM TESTIFYING IN OPPOSITION TO THE \$45,000.00 CUT TO DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES (DMHAS) LEGAL SERVICES LINE ITEM AS WELL AS THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH (DPH) CUT TO SCHOOL BASED HEALTH CENTERS.

For starters, Connecticut Legal Rights Project (CLRP) helps protect the civil rights of those with mental illness. They may be helping clients with housing discrimination, employment discrimination, advance directives, or treatment rights.

CUTTING THE \$450,000.00 (INCLUDING \$50,000.00 RESCISSION) WILL BE DISASTROUS AND SEVERELY IMPACT HOW CLRP PROVIDES THOSE SERVICES. THAT CUT WILL EFFECTIVELY ELIMINATE THEIR HOUSING ADVOCACY AND CAUSE THEM TO LAYOFF ALMOST HALF THEIR STAFF. CAUSING LAYOFFS WILL DECREASE THEIR ABILITY TO REPRESENT CLIENTS ON OTHER CIVIL RIGHTS MATTERS (ANY MATTERS OTHER THAN HOUSING).

I am one that CLRP helped with housing matters. Who knows where I would be in that ugly situation without them. They have helped other times since in other situations.

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT HAVING STABLE HOUSING IS ESSENTIAL TO RECOVERY IN MENTAL HEALTH. IT IS FAR MORE COST EFFECTIVE TO HAVE CLRP AND HELP WITH THE SITUATIONS THEY DO THAN NOT. PAYING FOR HOMELESSNESS AND EMERGENCY ROOMS IS MORE EXPENSIVE.

Having CLRP is having peace of mind for all. Also, we can't afford what they provide. They are far more knowledgeable than we are. Please don't take CLRP away from us. If CLRP didn't have what they have for funding, chances are you'll see more homeless, hospitalizations, and less people working. Overall, recovery in mental health will backslide without CLRP.

Now, cutting funding for school based health centers is fundamentally wrong. Why are balancing the budget on the backs of children and young adults? These centers are providing critical services to support children and young adults with behavioral health issues. We have heard so much about the Sandy Hook Commission. They and other task forces have found that these centers do this. Why not listen to them?

If you told me to choose one over the other though I would tell you CLRP. Thank you.