

**Statement of Esteban Francisco Sebourne**  
**Appropriations Committee**  
**February 18, 2016**

Dear honorable Senators and Representatives of the Appropriations Committee of the State of Connecticut, my name is Esteban Franciso Sebourne, and I live at 1290 Iranistan Avenue Bridgeport CT. I am asking you today to act bravely to restore Connecticut Legal Rights Project's funding under the DMHAS Legal Services line item.

CLRP has represented me on some 30 cases since 1994. These cases have ranged from brief legal advice to full blown litigation. For example, Joanne Bilger advocated for me at Connecticut Valley Hospital when my right to refuse medication was being violated. She successfully prevented me from being force medicated and thereby preserved my right to autonomy. On another occasion Gina Teixeira advocated for me when I was an inpatient at Greater Bridgeport Community Mental Health Center. In that case, Gina fought for my right to have meaningful participation in my treatment plan, and, more importantly, a voice. CLRP even helped me create and execute an advance directive which will help ensure that my rights and preferences are respected should I ever become incapacitated. Yet again in 2014 I was discriminated against when I was asked to vacate the lunch room of a Hospital only because it was known that I had been in the inpatient ward two days after my release from their doctor's care. CLRP helped me as I gained a settlement and my right to make use of the facilities used by the public was upheld by the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities.

CLRP has always been there when I have needed them. They ensure that my civil rights are enforced and help protect me from discrimination. I sincerely hope that their funding is maintained, so that if I, or others like me, need their services in the future, that they will be available.