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INTERNATIONAL UNION, UNITED AUTOMOBILE, AEROSPACE & AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT WORKERS OF AMERICA-UAW

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DENNIS WILLIAMS, President



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**Public Hearing Testimony**  
**Appropriations Committee**  
**United Auto Workers Region 9A**  
**Julie Kushner, Director**  
**Department of Social Services Budget Proposal**  
**February 19, 2016**

Good evening. My name is Julie Kushner. I am the Director of the United Auto Workers (UAW) Region 9A. I am here this evening on behalf of our members from UAW National Organization of Legal Service Workers Local 2320 – a national amalgamated local union of legal services attorneys and staff. In Connecticut, we represent attorneys and staff at several programs, the largest of which is CT Legal Services.

Joining me this evening is a member of that local union who works at CT Legal Services. Our members provide services to low income residents dealing with domestic violence, homelessness and lack of access to disability benefits, Medicaid and other safety net services.

We are here this evening to thank your committee, the legislature, the Governor and the Judicial Branch for their commitment to Connecticut's legal aid programs, workers, services and clients.

As importantly however, we are here to urge this committee and this legislature to preserve legal aid's funding in your budget and in the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG).

As you know, the Governor's budget proposes that SSBG funding for legal aid be cut. This would be an unsustainable and devastating blow to these programs, their staff and clients. Even with preserving funding in the budget and the SSBG, these programs are projecting a \$2 million deficit next year.

Our members have already endured layoffs, unpaid furlough days, attrition and restructuring. This stress and the continued onslaught of budget cuts is taking its toll on them and their clients.

We fully understand the challenges you face in balancing the state budget, yet must implore you to reaffirm your commitment to these programs, workers and clients by preserving current funding levels.

Thank you.