

**Friendship Service Center (FSC) of New Britain, Inc.**  
**February 19, 2016**  
**Testimony before the Appropriations Committee in Support of Funding for**  
**Legal Aid**

Hello Senator Bye, Representative Walker, Senator Kane, Representative Ziobron and members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Rachael Davis and I administer the PEAK Supportive Housing Program (SHP) for 35 HUD funded scattered site apartments, which house formerly homeless and chronically homeless persons whose household has a person with a disability (adult and/or a child).

Our clients face a range of barriers/obstacles that have prevented them from obtaining a safe, secure and decent place to call home including, but not limited to, prior domestic violence, mental health issues, co-occurring disorders and substance abuse that impact their ability to obtain housing, to victims of identity theft, familial separation due to DCF involvement, to the denial of Social Security (SS) benefit claims, eligibility for public benefits like food stamps, housing discrimination and immigration issues.

CLS has provided legal representation to many clients, helping them to overcome those barriers. In my work at the Friendship Center, I see the need for services provided by CLS lawyers in our community. Too many people who suffer from physical, mental health and other disabling conditions find it difficult to maneuver through various government, state, municipal and private systems. Their problems that otherwise seem intractable deserve to have the legal support to help them solve the problems. On behalf of our clients, I am grateful to CLS attorneys because they have and continue to make a positive difference in the lives of people who desperately need access to legal representation. Please do not cut the funding for legal aid.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rachael Davis  
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