

Testimony of King County Public Hearing

Stan Kehl

(2 minutes)

Good Evening Committee Chair McDermott, members of the Council. I'm Stan Kehl, ELAP's Executive Director. This year we are celebrating 25 years of providing free legal services to low income people on the Eastside and to survivors of domestic violence from all of King County. We are now serving more clients than ever and your support has made this possible. We thank County Executive Dow Constantine for recognizing the important role we and other legal service providers play in helping King County residents, and including us in his proposed budget at 2014 funding levels, along with a cost of living increase.

While it would be more compelling to have a domestic violence survivor tell her own story, we recognize how difficult that can be, so I will just tell you about one of our clients who I will call Julia.

Julia, a dedicated mother of two, determined enough was enough. After 15 years of marriage and two beautiful children, Julia knew it was time to leave when her husband became physically abusive not only towards her, but to their two young children, ages 3 and 5.

After seeking help from the King County Protection Order Advocates in Seattle, Julia was able to obtain a Temporary Order for Protection to protect her and her children from her husband. With this protection in place, Julia started to think about building a new life with her family without her husband.

However, the same day that Julia got the Temporary Protection Order, her husband, who knew she was trying to obtain legal protection, attained a Civil Restraining Order. These conflicting orders completely undermined her attempt to protect herself and her children as the police were unable to react with both in place.

After receiving this devastating news, Julia returned to the protection order advocates not knowing where else to go. Her husband had already retained an attorney to target, and remove, her protection order. Having a great partnership with ELAP, the protection order advocates contacted ELAP for emergency legal services for Julia.

Within an hour ELAP was at Julia's side during the hearing. ELAP was able to successfully maintain Julia's protection order and have her husband's civil restraining order quashed. Julia's order allowed her to stay in her house with her children while ELAP was awarded attorney fees.

Julia was so thankful for the help ELAP provided that she cried and hugged her ELAP attorney.

Our goal is to provide legal services to as many DV survivors like Julia as possible. Thank you for your support in doing this.