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**Paine Senior Services**

*Serving Cambridge Since 1905*

Elizabeth F. Aguilo, LICSW  
Executive Director

May 1, 2014

Dear City Council Members,

I have just learned that as a result of further budget cuts, Greater Boston Legal Services is considering whether or not to close the Cambridge And Somerville Legal Services (CASLS) office to save money.

CASLS provides free, civil legal services to low income Cambridge residents with legal problems primarily in the areas of:

- Housing
- State and Federal government benefits and services
- Elder Law and  
Mental health/disability rights for adults and children with psychiatric and other disabilities.

Paine Senior Services has worked with CASLS on countless occasions over the years to help seniors keep or obtain affordable housing as well as access federal and state benefits and services. CASLS work with Cambridge's most vulnerable population. These seniors are the home-bound, those struggling with dementia, and those with mental health issues.

Seniors and their families receiving services from the Department of Mental Health, the Department of Developmental Services, and Mass Rehabilitation Commission are already consistently at risk for losing services for which they are eligible. If there is no community-based legal services office, many seniors and families will not receive the services they need to remain in the community or to care for family members--they would not be able to travel to Boston to get the legal services. In the end, this would result in pre-mature and unnecessary institutionalization, which has both a great financial cost as well as a great human cost.

I know that these are difficult times for all and if there is anything you can do to obtain funds for CASLS to stay in Cambridge, I know that the seniors of Cambridge would benefit greatly and would be grateful.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Aguilo, LICSW  
Executive Director  
Paine Senior Services