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Paine Senior Services

Serving Cambridge Since 1905

Elizabeth F. Agullo, 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.

During my 10 years as a social worker for Paine Senior Services I have worked closely with CASLS on multiple cases. Paine works with elderly Cambridge residents, many of whom are low income and suffer from multiple medical problems. Many of them are also either managing or struggling to manage mental health issues.

CASLS has worked with our most vulnerable clients to maintain their public benefits and housing. The extreme amount of stress our clients would face without such assistance will exacerbate their problems. During a time when so many human services programs are being cut we need the services and advocacy provided by CASLS now more than ever.

In the absence of such support our clients will be left to shelters, hospitals, nursing homes, and other institutions to deal with the fall out of not having an advocate to intervene at the start of a problem. A lack of stable housing and consistent public benefits would reduce their time living independently in our community.

I have also benefited from the guidance provided by CASLS. I cannot begin to express the importance of being able to call an attorney and talk through a problem. They have empowered me to help my clients. The loss of CASLS would be devastating to this community.

Sincerely,

Maureen Harty
Maureen Harty, LICSW