



90 Pitkin Street  
East Hartford, CT 06108  
(860) 282-7899  
(860) 282-7892 Fax  
(800) 281-1481 (CT only)

**Member Shelter Programs**

The Umbrella  
Ansonia, CT

The Center for Women & Families  
Bridgeport, CT

Women's Center  
Danbury, CT

United Services, Inc.  
Domestic Violence Programs  
Dayville, CT

Network Against Domestic Abuse  
Enfield, CT

Greenwich YWCA  
Domestic Abuse Service  
Greenwich, CT

Interval House  
Hartford, CT

Meriden-Wallingford Chrysalis  
Meriden, CT

New Horizons  
Middletown, CT

Prudence Crandall Center  
New Britain, CT

Domestic Violence Services  
New Haven, CT

Women's Center of SE CT  
New London, CT

Domestic Violence Crisis Center  
Norwalk, CT

Women's Support Services  
Sharon, CT

Domestic Violence Crisis Center  
Stamford, CT

Susan B. Anthony Project  
Torrington, CT

Safe Haven  
Waterbury, CT

United Services, Inc.  
Domestic Violence Programs  
Willimantic, CT

**To: Members of the Judiciary Committee**

**From: Linda Blozie, Director of Public Affairs**

**Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence**

**Date: March 10, 2006**

**Re: Raised Bill No. 5600- AN ACT CONCERNING PARENTING TIME AND PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY WITH RESPECT TO THE CUSTODY OF A MINOR CHILD**

Good afternoon, Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor and distinguished members of the Judiciary. My name is Linda Blozie and I am the Director of Public Affairs for the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence. I am here today to oppose Raised Bill No. 5600 - AN ACT CONCERNING PARENTING TIME AND PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY WITH RESPECT TO THE CUSTODY OF A MINOR CHILD as it relates to victims of domestic violence.

There is a general agreement that shared custody has many advantages when both parties have financial resources and a partner who is not abusive. This type of arrangement can and should permit and foster continuity in the child's relations with both parents. The concept recognizes two committed parents in separate homes caring for their child in an atmosphere of civilized, respectful exchange. Each parent needs to be responsible for and genuinely concerned with the well-being of the

child. Shared custody works best when both parents respect each other's parenting abilities, value the contribution each makes to the child's life, and are not at war with each other.

Yet, in any given custody case, domestic violence may be present. Whenever considering the best interests of a child, domestic violence in the home should always be a determining factor. Children witnessing domestic violence are more likely to do poorly in school, use alcohol and/or drugs, are more likely to exhibit behavioral or physical health problems and ultimately continue the cycle and become either perpetrators or victims. Parental separation or divorce does not necessarily end violent and abusive behavior. Joint custody and visitation situations can continue to expose children to abuse. Children end up being pawns in an abuser's attempt to gain control.

Before passing this bill, I would ask you to keep in mind that 1) domestic violence shall be considered in any child custody or visitation case and 2) that the award of custody to any perpetrator of domestic violence may violate any valid order of protection in the state of Connecticut.

Witnessing abuse towards one parent is not in the best interest of any child. Thank you.