



To: Human Services Committee  
From: Lisa Holden  
Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
Date: February 28, 2008  
Re: House Bill 5622: An Act Concerning the Expansion of  
Shelter Services for Victims of Household Abuse

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**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

Good morning, Senator Harris, Representative Villano and members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Lisa Holden and I am the Executive Director for the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Thank you for accepting my testimony regarding House Bill 5622: An Act Concerning the Expansion of Shelter Services for Victims of Household Abuse.

For the past six years, CCADV and its members programs have been working to increase access to emergency shelter and support services for victims of domestic violence. This has been a particularly challenging experience. We have many compelling stories, some you will hear today and in the essence of time, others have submitted written testimony. I understand your schedules are hectic, so I politely ask you to please take time to read what victims of domestic violence have written.

I don't think there is anyone here today who cannot empathize or does not understand the need for domestic violence services. Yet, in

an environment of limited funds for social programs, it seems to be more important to convince you that our programs are *effective and efficient* – that these programs are improving people’s lives in specific, measurable, and cost-effective ways.

When a victim of domestic violence and her children come to a shelter, *the cycle of violence is interrupted*. And when that cycle is interrupted, police are not going to the home, emergency medical care is not required, and employers do not lose productivity because victims are unable to work.

We can keep victims in the workforce because they will have a safe and supportive environment to return to at the end of each day. We can keep their children in school. We can reduce the likelihood of intergenerational violence because children will not be exposed to continued violence; instead they will be nurtured and taught at a young age that violence is not an acceptable way to solve problems.

That’s what the Connecticut Coalition and its eighteen member programs is offering. The chance to get quality services while saving money in the long run.

Three years ago, CCADV received \$500,000 additional funding towards implementing a plan to insure 24 hour on site round the clock staffing at our domestic violence shelters and we are once again seeking your assistance. I would like to share with you what we have been able to accomplish so that you know your state dollars are being well spent. With the \$500,000 we were able to provide an additional 300 hours of service per week for victims of domestic violence. This has translated into additional counseling and

advocacy services, time to facilitate groups and work specifically with the children. I am please to let you know that when 785 persons who sought our services were surveyed:

- 88% percent reported that they now know more about domestic violence and its effect on their lives;
- 89% percent now know more about the resources, services and options available to them;
- 87% percent now know increased ways to keep themselves safer; and
- 92% percent of those surveyed feel they have benefited from the services they have received.

I believe we have demonstrated the additional \$500,000 that we received has been put to good use. As suggested by you in the past, we have applied for United Way monies, we have volunteers and interns to assist us and we have secured all the federal dollars that are available to us. Through our fundraising efforts, we have been able to significantly reduce our request to you by \$1.5 million dollars but we find that we have exhausted all other potential sources of funding.

Last year alone, 53,000 victims of domestic violence received some type of assistance from their local program. We know that there are other victims who need our help, yet due to limited resources, we are unable to assist them.

Our request for additional funding may seem burdensome yet I can assure you that the cost to the state for other types of services that are offered as a solution to domestic violence are far more costly. Please consider helping victims to access support services

24 hours each and every day by allocating an additional \$ 2.25 million dollars in the DSS budget to support the work of each domestic violence program in Connecticut.

I thank you in advance for any positive consideration of my request.