



To: Members of the Judiciary Committee

From: Debrorah Beaudry, Family Violence Victim Advocate Supervisor

Date: March 3, 2008

Re: HB 5722: An Act Concerning Protective Orders and Court Services for  
Crime Victims

Good afternoon Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Deborahra Beaudry and I am the Family Violence Victim Advocate Supervisor for the Domestic Violence Crisis Center. I am here today to request your support via House Bill 5722 to fund a Domestic Violence Docket Advocate in our Norwalk court.

As the Family Violence Victim Advocate Supervisor, I am responsible for overseeing the day to day activities of the Family Violence Victim Advocates in both the Norwalk and Stamford criminal courts. The advocates act as the liaison between victims of domestic violence whose abusive partners have been arrested and other court personnel. As such, the advocates gather information from the victim about the abuse in their lives and they provide advocacy, counseling, and support services throughout the court case.

Both the Stamford and Norwalk courts have been identified as docket courts. Yet only the Stamford court has been resourced with a specialized docket advocate. In Norwalk, all cases are referred to the docket court and last year alone, the arraignment caseload was double that of the Stamford court. To effectively safety plan with a victim, we need to have time available but having too many cases and not enough staff is detrimental to the quality of services that could be available to the victim.

We would like to provide the same level of services in the Norwalk court as we do in the Stamford docket court. We have raised private funds to begin the process but cannot guarantee that this funding will continue. It is my understanding that funding has been put into the Governor's budget to support a docket advocate in the Norwalk, New London and New Britain courts.

Today, I am asking you to take the necessary legislative action to insure that we are able to advocate for victims whose abusers are a part of the specialized docket court in Norwalk.

Thank you for your time.