



Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence

To: Members of the Judiciary Committee

From: Lisa Holden, Executive Director of CCADV

Date: March 3, 2008

Re: RB: 5722 AAC Protective Orders and Court Services for Crime Victims

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

Good afternoon Representative Lawlor, Senator McDonald and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Lisa Holden and I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV). I am here today to support RB 5722: AAC Protective Orders and Court Services for Crime Victims. As this bill addresses oversight of the courts through the Chief Court Administrator's Office, I ask you to create an amendment to the bill that would add funding for three Domestic Violence Docket Advocates in three special DV docket court locations for a total of \$150,000.

The \$150,000, which is currently in the Governor's Budget, will support three full time Family Violence Victim Advocates in three domestic violence docket courts located in: Norwalk, New Britain and New London that began in 2006. The \$50,000 requested for each full time advocate will cover their salary, fringe, supervision and all operating expenses.

In February 2006 there was a decision to expand Connecticut's domestic violence docket courts to new locations in the Norwalk, New Britain, and New London judicial districts. This decision was the result of a joint initiative supported by the state Judicial Branch, the Chief State's Attorney's Office, and the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence. While the decision to

expand the dockets was the right one, there was one glaring problem: no funding to support the necessary advocates.

Specialized domestic violence docket courts offer enhanced victim safety while holding offenders accountable. Docket Advocates work closely with victims to relay their concerns to the court, develop safety plans, and uphold the victims' right to obtain helpful information about the progress of the case.

The specialized docket courts have the goal of increasing victim safety and offender accountability through "vertical case management," which seeks to enhance effectiveness through a coordination of resources and a team approach to each case. That team includes law enforcement, prosecutors, family relations counselors, probation officers and docket family violence victim advocates. Team members monitor a case from start to finish and hold weekly meetings to share information about the case. In addition, a judge monitors the case through court appearances and conferences in chambers.

Prosecution of DV docket cases is more victim-centered than evidence-driven; meaning that the prosecutor's office relies on information provided by Family Violence Victim Advocates and Family Services to make decisions regarding further prosecution of the case. The role of the victim is recognized as significant in the Domestic Violence docket model; therefore contact with the victim(s) is a constant part of the process, largely through the efforts of the advocate's office. Victims frequently require ongoing services, and information shared by them may be used for assessment purposes. Further, pursuant to the Violence Against Women Act, the criminal justice system is obligated to ensure