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New Horizons
Middletown, CT

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Torrington, CT

Safe Haven
Waterbury, CT

United Services, Inc.
Domestic Violence Programs
Willimantic, CT

To: Members of the Government Administration and Elections
Committee

From: Linda Blozie, Director of Public Affairs

Date: February 10, 2009

Re: Senate Bill 839: An Act Concerning Mergers and Consolidations
of Various State Agencies

Good morning Senator Slossberg, Representative Spallone and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee. My name is Linda Blozie and I am the Director of Public Affairs for the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Thank you for accepting my testimony regarding Senate Bill 839: An Act Concerning Mergers and Consolidations of Various State Agencies.

I am here this morning to ask you to seriously reconsider moving the State's Child Advocate to the Office of the Attorney General. The Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence has long established relationship with the Office of the Child Advocate can attest to its value.

CCADV has been working collaboratively with the Office of the Child Advocate for at least ten years. Not only are they the watchdog organization for children in Connecticut, they also have worked collaboratively with children's providers across the state to prevent child abuse and neglect. In relation to the work we do, they have taken up the cause of domestic violence from the children's perspective.

We are proud to work with the Office of the Child Advocate. Together, we have investigated domestic fatalities where both the mother and children were killed. Our organization sits on the Child Fatality Review Team and their staff sits on our Domestic Fatality Review Team. We have also worked together towards reducing the incidence of teen dating violence. Together, we have co-sponsored a teen dating violence forum that was attended by well over 300 students.

Jeanne Milstein is a very capable Child Advocate, but I cannot imagine that she can do it alone. The work of her office has led to the advancement and promotion of eliminating teen dating and domestic violence in Connecticut. I know that we are not the only organization that calls upon their expertise. The Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence does not and will not ever have the time and resources to do what can be accomplished with a single phone call to their office. That is why I am here this morning to ask you to reconsider the elimination of this office.

Thank you.