

Testimony Of Dianna Langston

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Good morning Senator McDonald, Senator Doyle, Representative Walker, Representative Lawlor and members of the Human Services and Judiciary Committee. My name is Dianna Langston and I am an Adult Advocate at New Horizons Domestic Violence Services in Middletown, CT. I am here today to support the domestic violence task force recommendations and to persuade you to allocate additional funds for 24-hour coverage at domestic violence shelters. With that said, I would like to tell you all about an amazing woman that I currently work with.

On December 2, 2009 our agency sheltered this woman and her 3 teenage children. I will identify this woman as Anne for confidentiality purposes. Anne and her 3 children have been through more trauma than any client I have had thus far. For the first time in 18 years, Anne, being married to an extremely abusive man, was able to safely leave her home. Anne has tried to leave several times in the past and attempted to seek help but she continually fell through the cracks. Anne and her oldest child are also undocumented immigrants. Anne taught herself how to speak English by watching cartoons with her children because her husband isolated her from the rest of the world. Nearly everyday of Anne's marriage she was degraded, beaten, and raped. Until the day Anne left, all 3 children were emotionally and physically abused as well. After over a two-month wait, Anne is currently working with an attorney who is helping her and her daughter file for a U VISA to gain residency. Without this visa, Anne and her daughter would never be able to attend college in the future and live their dreams of a better life. Anne's next step is to

begin divorce and custody proceedings with CT Legal Services so that Anne and her children can finally break the rest of their ties to a man each of them wishes to forget.

Anne is one of the many survivors the 18 domestic violence programs in Connecticut see every day. With our help, Anne and her teenage children will eventually be able to move out of the shelter and on to a violence free life. For Anne, that day cannot come soon enough.

Anne and her children, along with many others would never be able to break the cycle of domestic violence and safely be freed, if not for the services of domestic violence programs and laws designed to protect her. Today, I ask you to consider moving forward with Raised Bills 5246 and 5497. Thank you.