Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence
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To: Public Safety and Security Committee

From: Linda Blozie
Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Date: March 4, 2010

Re: RB 5344: An Act Concerning the Nondisclosure of Information Regarding Persons Arrested for Domestic Violence

Good afternoon, Senator Stillman and Representative Dargan and members of the Public Safety and Security 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 in opposition to Raised Bill 5344: An Act Concerning the Nondisclosure of Information Regarding Persons Arrested for Domestic Violence.

One of the primary goals within the movement to eradicate domestic violence has been to bring the issue into the open, to educate people about it, to encourage people to talk about it and to mitigate the unwarranted shame that is oftentimes felt by victims. A parallel goal has been to ensure that society understands that domestic violence is a crime in the state of Connecticut. Advocates and public officials have worked for years to make certain that domestic violence is recognized as a crime, for police to make arrests in domestic violence cases and for prosecutors

to move forward with holding perpetrators of domestic violence accountable for their behavior, even when the victim is reluctant or refuses to press charges.

While it is recognized that some victims may be upset if their partner's name appears in their local newspaper because of a domestic violence related arrest, society will, in the long run, benefit from the consistency and clarity of understanding that this is a crime treated as other crimes are treated. The media has the legal right to publish the names of those arrested for any crime, and to argue that abusers in domestic cases should be exempt does not help the victim, but rather, once again, allows the abuser a certain immunity from punishment.

The Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence and our eighteen member programs exist to provide help and support to victims, and do so with a broad range of services and significant depth of experience. That experience gives rise to the belief that victims do not benefit when their abusers are shielded from the public eye. Four walls, closed doors and shaded windows provide the perfect venue for abusers to terrorize their victims. To then offer them the veil of secrecy upon arrest is misguided and merely serves to perpetuate the notion that domestic violence is something to be hushed up. We have worked too long for domestic violence to be defined as a crime, and to minimize it as such is counterproductive and wrong.

Thank you.