



Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Written Testimony

Regarding

HB 6350, AAC the Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2015, and Other Provisions Related to Revenue

Appropriations Committee

February 22, 2013

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Member Agencies

Center for Domestic Violence Services
at BHcare
Ansonia, CT

The Center for Women & Families
Bridgeport, CT

Women's Center
Danbury, CT

Domestic Violence Program
United Services
Dayville, CT

Network Against Domestic Abuse
Enfield, CT

Domestic Abuse Services
Greenwich YWCA
Greenwich, CT

Interval House
Hartford, CT

Meriden-Wallingford Chrysalis
Menden, CT

New Horizons
Middletown, CT

Prudence Crandall Center
New Britain, CT

Center for Domestic Violence Services
at BHcare
New Haven, CT

Safe Futures
New London, CT

Domestic Violence Crisis Center
Norwalk, CT

Women's Support Services
Sharon, CT

Domestic Violence Crisis Center
Stanford, CT

Susan B. Anthony Project
Torrington, CT

Safe Haven
Waterbury, CT

Domestic Violence Program
United Services
Willimantic, CT

Good afternoon Senator Harp, Representative Walker, Representative Abercrombie and members of the committee. CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) is the state's leading voice for victims of domestic violence and our 18 member agencies that serve them. We thank Governor Malloy for maintaining funding through the Department of Social Services (DSS) for domestic violence shelters and urge your support.

Last year, CCADV's 18 member programs served more than 57,000 victims of domestic violence. This includes the nearly 300 victims that are in our shelters on any given day because they are in serious physical danger and have no other safe options. Victims face a number of obstacles when they choose to leave an abusive and controlling relationship, the ripple effects of which often include loss of employment, educational opportunities, childcare and housing. Victims are often faced with the impossible choice of remaining in the abusive or violent situation, becoming homeless or living in poverty. It is often at this point that they turn to domestic violence agencies for support and shelter.

Achieving sustainable safety, financial security, and emotional well-being for themselves and their children are always the goals. Unfortunately, these goals often seem impossible to attain in the minds of victims. However, the services provided by our member programs make it extremely possible. Our shelter programs provide a safe, secure and supportive environment that includes safety planning, counseling, life skills training to help transition victims after their shelter stay, and access to other vital needs, such as court advocacy and employment referrals.

It is critical that we get victims into shelter, especially in high-danger situations. Here in Connecticut, an average of 16 people are killed as a result of intimate partner homicide each year. Through our Lethality Assessment Program, CCADV and several of our member programs have partnered with law enforcement agencies across the state to use a nationally recognized screening tool to identify victims facing the greatest risk for the abuse turning lethal. Law enforcement immediately connects these victims to the local domestic violence program and available shelter beds are an essential factor in the victim's ability to immediately leave.

Our shelters are staffed 24 hours per day, 7 days per week by individuals dedicated to empowering victims to overcome their abusive relationships. By ensuring that victims have somewhere safe to go, we also ensure that the cycle of violence is interrupted. This helps us avoid other costly services, such as law enforcement responding to calls and the need for emergency medical care, which is often paid for with Medicaid.

As with most other human services, our members continue to see the demand for their services rise. More and more victims come through our doors seeking safety and support at the same time that the cost for providing those services increases. We urge you to maintain domestic violence shelter funding and help ensure that we can meet the needs of Connecticut's victims.

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