912 Silas Deane Highway
Lower Level
Wethersfield, CT 06109

(860) 282-7899
(860) 282-7892 Fax
(800) 281-1481 (CT only)

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
Meriden, 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
Stamford, CT

Susan B. Anthony Project
Torrington, CT

Safe Haven
Waterbury, CT

Domestic Violence Program
United Services
Willimantic, CT

Written Testimony

Opposing
HB 6691, AAC the Issuance of a Written Complaint and Summons for the Commission of a Misdemeanor or Violation

Supporting
SB 1158, AAC Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking
HB 6696, AAC Enhanced State Efforts to Prevent Human Trafficking

Judiciary Committee
April 15, 2013

Good morning Senator Coleman, Representative Fox and members of the committee. CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) is the state's leading voice for victims of domestic violence and those agencies that serve them. Our 18 member programs provide essential services to victims such as 24-hour crisis response, emergency shelter, safety planning, counseling, support groups, and court advocacy.

CCADV **OPPOSES** the following bill:

HB 6691

CCADV opposes this measure which s would prohibit police officers from taking any person arrested for the commission of a misdemeanor offense into custody. If the person presents proper identification they shall be issued a written complaint and released on written promise.

We have grave concerns about the danger that may be present to victims of domestic violence when an offender is charged with a misdemeanor offense, which, for instance, could include 3rd degree assault and 2nd degree threatening, but is then not taken into custody by the police officer. Simply noting that the offender has proper identification, issuing a written complaint and summons and then leaving the offender in the home of the victim could lead to more serious violence. Taking the offender into custody is often a necessary step to ensure separation from the victim.

Furthermore, this bill will remove the police officer's ability to hold a person on bond. Police officers make bond recommendations based on the offender's threat to the community and risk of flight. There are many situations where offenders continue to be a threat to domestic violence victims after an arrest. The threat to these victims may increase as a result of the offender's arrest. If an offender of a domestic violence offense does not appear in court, they present a continuing danger for the victim.

When police officers evaluate that a victim is in high danger they will not have the authority to hold an offender on bond or set conditions of release that require the offender to stay away from the victim. We have serious concerns that an offender with proper identification can present to an officer a total disregard for the victim's safety but must still be released in the community. In addition the voice of the victim who has concerns for his/her safety would be ignored if the change proposed in this bill was to be implemented.

Connecticut is currently one of ten states participating in a Lethality Assessment Program, which is a partnership between law enforcement and local domestic violence providers that seeks to identify victims at high risk for fatality and connect them to services. Increased threat of violence is one of several risk factors for lethality. Identifying those threats but then not requiring the police officer to take the offender into custody could be detrimental to the safety of the victim and in complete disregard of nationally recognized standards for assessing and preventing lethal violence.

We urge your thorough consideration of the danger that victims of domestic violence face and your rejection of any general exemption for all misdemeanors and violations as cause to take an individual into custody.

CCADV **SUPPORTS** the following bills:

SB 1158

CCADV supports this measure which seeks to add sexual exploitation of a minor to the list of crimes for which assets derived from that crime are subject to inventory, seizure, and forfeiture. The bill also requires that the Chief Court Administer develop a bilingual notice about the services available to victims of human trafficking and that those notices be displayed in certain areas where victims might be, such as truck stops and places with liquor permits. Developing notification about available services and getting them in places where victims may be will greatly increase the number of victims who are able to reach out for help and escape the abuse.

HB 6696

CCADV supports this measure which, among other things, seeks to increase penalties for individuals that patronize prostitutes under the age of 18 or victims of human trafficking, as well allow the court to vacate criminal convictions for prostitution involving victims of human trafficking. Human trafficking is just one of many forms of violence against women that permeates our society. Any efforts to increase penalties for those who perpetrate these crimes and protections for its victims are welcomed by CCADV.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Liza Andrews
Communications & Public Policy Specialist
(860) 282-7899
landrews@ctcadv.org