February 6, 2013

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to support the DVCC in their efforts to ensure that victims of domestic violence in Connecticut have access to economic protections, such as child support or spousal support, when seeking restraining orders for their safety. I have been a victim of domestic violence, and if I had access to such protections, my struggle to safely remove myself and my daughter from an abusive relationship would have been much easier.

In 2007, I married David Weiss. We had a daughter, Kate, the following year. I chose to leave my teaching position to be a full-time mother to care for our child, who was diagnosed with Pervasive Developmental Disorder with delays in speech, attention, and social skills, as well as other health issues. During the time that Kate and I lived with her father, we were subjected to his explosive temper and were targets of his violent acts. David has screamed, grabbed, kicked, punched and choked me, and has thrown heavy objects at both me and Kate. Finally, I realized that staying in this relationship was no longer an option.

In August 2011, I reported my story to the Westport Police, and David was arrested for domestic violence crimes. He has since pleaded guilty to strangulation and reckless endangerment. Following David's arrest, I filed for a restraining order and, subsequently, a divorce. In retaliation for the arrest and the restraining order, David completely cut off Kate and I financially while these legal proceedings were pending.

During the first six months of our separation, my parents supported Kate and me until a financial agreement was entered into in March 2012. I am so thankful for the help and support of my parents because I had absolutely no financial resources to support my daughter. I was unemployed at the time and completely dependent on my husband. I was very fortunate that my parents were in a position to help me bridge the gap. I know that many women in that same position are not so lucky and are forced to return to abusive situations.

Today, I am asking local legislators and the CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence to help mothers and children get out of abusive relationships by allowing them to seek temporary spousal and child support as part of the restraining order to help them survive economically, until they can figure out how to independently support themselves and their children.

Sincerely,

Mary Weiss

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