



Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Testimony in Support of

SB 426, AA Suspending and Evaluating the Consolidation of Dispatch Centers within the Division of State Police

**Public Safety & Security Committee
March 11, 2014**

Member Organizations

The Umbrella Center for Domestic Violence Services
Ansonia, CT

The Center for Family Justice
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

The Umbrella Center for Domestic Violence Services
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

Good morning Senator Hartley, Representative Dargan 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 members provide essential services to over 56,000 victims of domestic violence, which includes victims of teen dating violence. Services provided include 24-hour crisis response, emergency shelter, safety planning, counseling, support groups and court advocacy.

We urge your support of SB 426.

Connecticut State Police play an important role in the lives of many domestic violence victims in our state. As you know, state police troops cover large parts of the state and many of those areas are rural and sparsely populated. This fact alone means that response times by state police in those areas will typically be longer than the response times of municipal police departments serving smaller and more densely populated areas. Add in the fact that the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) has begun to consolidate state troop dispatch operations and the result is increasing response times that puts everyone's safety at risk.

Over the past decade, Connecticut has averaged 14 homicides annually stemming from intimate partner violence. Having a timely response to a call for help can mean the difference between life and death. And even if a homicide is not imminent, a timely response can make a difference in victims viewing the police as a viable source of protection.

It takes a great deal of courage for victims to reach out to law enforcement to intercede in domestic violence. Domestic violence remains something that many victims find shameful. Many think they did something to cause the abusive behavior they experience at the hands of their partner and they're often hesitant to share that with others, especially law enforcement. If law enforcement cannot be responsive when victims reach out for what may be perceived by the police as a minor incident, than as the violence escalates, victims will not believe that the police will be there to help and they simply won't call.

We strongly encourage you to support this legislation and suspend any further consolidation of state police dispatch centers. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

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