



Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence

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

Providence Cawdall 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 H. Anthony Project
Torrington, CT

Safe Haven
Waterbury, CT

Domestic Violence Program United Services
Willimantic, CT

Testimony in Support of

HB 5357, AA Increasing Access to Child Care Subsidies for Working Families

**Human Services Committee
January 29, 2015**

Good morning Senator Moore, 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 those agencies that serve them. Our members provide essential services to nearly 50,000 victims of domestic violence each year. Services provided include 24-hour crisis response, emergency shelter, safety planning, counseling, support groups and court advocacy.

We urge your support of HB 5357.

As you know, domestic violence is widely perceived as a way for abusers to maintain power and control over their victims. Research demonstrates that 98% of domestic violence victims experience some kind of financial abuse in which their abuser restricts or forbids access to money and other financial resources. This restricted access leaves victims dependent on their abusers for financial security.

There are many strategies that abusers use to keep their victims financially dependent on them. Often, these restrictions include creating an "allowance," withholding access to bank accounts or credit cards, and/or preventing victims from attending work or school. These tactics work to keep victims from leaving their abusers simply because they lack any access to money outside their abuser's influence. Many victims are left to make a difficult choice between abuse or homelessness and poverty.

When children are involved, the decision to leave can become even more agonizing. If a victim doesn't have access to their own money or a source of income, then taking care of their child may not seem possible if they leave the relationship. Childcare is expensive and even many employed caretakers simply do not make enough money to pay for that service in addition to other household expenses, such as food, shelter, and other basic needs. If they were the primary caregiver staying home with the child, how will they provide care for that child while also seeking employment to pay all of the household expenses? Going from a team of two to a team of one can be daunting even in an amicable situation, let alone one with financial abuse present. In fact, many victims of domestic abuse list finances and financial instability as the main reason that they either do not leave an abusive home or they return to one.

We strongly encourage you to support this legislation to initiate an examination of the current eligibility requirements for the state-funded child care programs with the goal of increasing access to the program. Such a review and possible program expansion could have a drastically positive impact on the futures of domestic violence victims across the state. Thank you for your consideration.

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For questions, please contact Liza Andrews, Director of Public Policy & Communications, at 860.282.7899 or landrews@ctcadv.org