

March 11, 2015

Oppose Bill 6962, 650, 6848 as they are currently written.

From talking to actual victims of domestic violence and stalking here are some of the items that they came up with that they feel would have made them feel better when they were in the "critical time period" that governor Malloy refers to in his press conference:

1. Better communication in the judicial system. One person's experience was that she had restraining orders in three towns in CT. The one that she lived in and the town that she worked and the town her parents lived in. When going to a hearing in Hartford her case was going to be tossed out because he had not violated the order in Hartford, yet in the other towns he had had multiple arrests. If there was better communication between Judicial areas this may not have happened.
2. When you are truly in fear for your life, 14 days is an eternity. Being heard by a judge in 24 to 48 hours makes much more sense.
3. Patrols in the victim's place of residence could also make a would be attacker less aggressive.
4. Once the order has been submitted, a button or something simple to push to get the police to take action because when they are being confronted making a phone call can be much harder than one might expect. When in a person has made the decision to place the restraining order they are committed to getting safe, but are still afraid.
5. Communication from the courthouse to the police. People have had a judge issued order in place and when the victim called the police, they knew nothing of the restraining order, so they were not inclined to do anything.

The truth of the matter is that not a single law has EVER stopped a crime. There is a saying, "locks only keep honest people out." Laws are used for punishment AFTER the crime has been committed IF there is someone to catch the law breaker. Laws don't protect, police, families, and communities do.

Proposed bill 650, I absolutely LOVE the intent, "That section 46b-15 of the general statutes be amended to improve the service and effectiveness of temporary restraining orders issued..." The intention of this bill is commendable. The challenge I have is the parts of this bill that will not help and possibly hinder that goal. I am absolutely for increasing the access on the part of applicants to domestic violence advocates. The other parts that relate to firearms are not helpful. The rest simply has the potential to exacerbate an already possibly volatile situation.

I have studied the numbers from the State of Connecticut's Family Violence detailed report of 2012. Guns are used in the least amount of aggressions in domestic violence. Roughly 160 incidences of gun problems per year occur in domestic violence events. Compare that to knives, 655 instances. Hands, fists and feet are responsible for 12,610 events. As a friend of many people who have lived with this problem, intervention and counseling is much more important than focusing on the smallest part of the problem. Again I applaud the idea behind these bills, to improve the effectiveness of temporary restraining orders, but these changes being suggested fail to achieve that. The numbers are clear, you are making sweeping changes to protect 160 people, in a year and leaving over 13,000 with no more protection than when you

started. I believe that each and every one of you sitting here in this room ran for office to make a difference, to make Connecticut a better place to live for all of us. With that in mind it would be great to see you go back to the drawing board and work on a bill that helps all victims of domestic violence, not just 160 of the thousands.

I believe that having more advocates available is a great step. Even if it just someone to talk to while filling in the paperwork could be soothing. What about taking that step further and making counselors or police officers available to them to be able to go home and feel safer. What about funding more places that families can go for temporary housing?

Looking to the CDC for violence prevention and one of the programs I found suggested the following:

Common strategies used in the field to prevent intimate partner violence include:

- Promoting healthy relationships and communication skills
- Engaging men and boys in violence prevention
- Developing youth assets and leaders
- Encouraging bystander intervention
- Changing gender and violence social norms
- Informing policy and systems change
- Building coalitions
- Mobilizing communities

<http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/deltafocus/index.html>

Please continue ask, "Is this bill really fixing the problem it claims to address?"

Thank you for your time and service,
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Mother of a 7&8 year old, firearms instructor and competitive shooter, organic blueberry farmer, wife, sister, daughter, friend, optimist that we can solve the violence problem one step at a time.