

Testimony Regarding HB 5044, AA Making Adjustments to State Expenditures for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2017

Dear Members of the Appropriation Committee:

Please take this true story into consideration when weighing the pros and cons of any budget cuts to domestic violence services in Connecticut and the importance of keeping domestic violence services as a separate line item in the state budget.

The Center for Family Justice is a member program of the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence located in Bridgeport, CT. The Center serves the towns of Bridgeport, Easton, Fairfield, Monroe, Stratford, and Trumbull.

The Center for Family Justice breaks the cycle of abuse and violence – domestic, sexual and child – by providing services that create hope, restore lives and drive social change through education and community collaboration.

Testimony from Advocates in our Advocacy Department

The Center for Family Justice has provided life-saving services to victims and their children in the towns of Bridgeport, Stratford, Fairfield, Trumbull, Monroe & Easton. Our services include free and confidential counseling for adults and children, safety planning, advocacy services, crisis and safe home services, court advocacy services, support group services, self-sufficiency services, coordination of child forensic interviews and other services necessary to ensure victims of domestic and sexual violence are having their needs met.

The Advocacy Unit specifically assists victims and their children who are coping with the impact of domestic violence on the family system. It is through our program, the individual and group counseling they receive, case management, and ongoing support, that victims develop the tools necessary to cope with an abusive situation and become an empowered survivor.

We respectfully ask that you carefully consider any cuts to an already stressed nonprofit human services system that provides help to victims of domestic violence. We already struggle to meet the high demand for services and need to help keep victims safe. Further cuts to this system will be devastating and leave many victims and their children with no place to turn for help.

We also respectfully oppose the proposed block grant system for human services, including domestic violence services, and ask that you please consider its potential impact on an already fragile system and our ability to ever effect change to the funding stream for their services.

Your choices can make the difference between right and wrong, safety and fear, hope and hopelessness, and in some cases life and death for countless victims of abuse.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

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