

**TESTIMONY OF NICOLLETTE ARANIBAR, ADVOCATE INTERN UNITED SERVICES INC. IN
SUPPORT OF HB NO. 5054: AN ACT PROTECTING VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

My name is Nicollette Aranibar and I am an advocate intern for the Domestic Violence Program of United Services Inc. I am writing on behalf of my support of HB No. 5054: An Act Protecting Victims of Domestic Violence.

I work in the emergency shelter for the Domestic Violence Program. Every day I work closely with survivors and their children who were previously forced to leave their homes due to violence and abuse. On our initial intake we ask if any weapons were used or if the abuser has any access to weapons. This would not be a question of priority if it was something taken lightly. Not only is the use of weapons in domestic violence considered a high danger situation, but the possession alone is high risk. I have personally had a woman come into emergency shelter who had an abuser that had access to several different types of weapons. During the intake when she arrived at the shelter, she expressed her fear that her abuser may come looking for her and use these weapons to harm her. Originally they were just a possession used as a threat, but because the woman left she feared for her life what he would do with these weapons if he found her. To put things into perspective, imagine a woman filing for a restraining order against an abuser with weapons in possession that is not leaving her home. That fear is unfathomable.

The most dangerous time for victims is when they break the pattern of abuse and attempt to end a relationship whether it is fleeing the home for safety or filing a restraining order. This bill would further protect victims during this dangerous period of time. Though the temporary removal of weapons from the home may not eliminate the problem, but it could be the difference between life and death for a victim. I strongly support and encourage the passing of HB No. 5054: An Act Protecting Victims of Domestic Violence so that all victims are one step closer to safely leaving their toxic relationships.

Sincerely,

Nicollette Aranibar