

# SUPPORT DOMESTIC & SEXUAL VIOLENCE SERVICES INCREASE CONNECTICUT'S MARRIAGE LICENSE SURCHARGE

## SUPPORT SB 1011

### WHAT DOES IT DO?

The Marriage License Surcharge (MLS) is a fee paid by those obtaining a marriage license in Connecticut. Since its implementation in 1992, the MLS has not been increased from the current amount of \$20. The surcharge is distributed as follows:

- \$1 is retained by the municipality
- \$19 is deposited into a fund for equal distribution by the Department of Public Health to support sexual violence services and the Department of Social Services to support domestic violence services.

Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence urge the General Assembly to increase **Connecticut's Marriage License Surcharge** (MLS) (§7-73) to **\$35** to support essential domestic and sexual violence services.

### WHAT DOES FUNDING SUPPORT?

Funding is allocated to each of the state's community-based domestic and sexual violence organizations (see reverse side for list of providers) to support a variety of critical victim services such as:

- Statewide crisis hotlines
- Short- and long-term counseling
- Victim accompaniment in hospital or police settings
- Maintain and improve shelter infrastructure
- Transportation costs

**Economic and fiscal challenges continue to impact domestic and sexual violence services** at both ends - financial supports are being reduced for service providers while victims seeking our help are experiencing more acute, complex problems due to the impact of the economy on their own personal lives.

### HOW DOES THIS PROPOSAL CHANGE FUNDING?

#### Current MLS:

- In addition to the current MLS (\$20), there is a \$10 license fee that is retained by the municipality, making the total existing cost of a marriage license in Connecticut \$30.
- There are approximately 19,000 marriage licenses issued in Connecticut each year meaning that the \$19 of the MLS dedicated to domestic and sexual violence services generates an average of \$361,000 annually.

#### Impact of Proposal:

- Under this proposal, the surcharge would be raised to \$35. The bill also proposes increasing the fee retained by the municipality to \$15, making the **total cost of a marriage license \$50**.
- As \$34 of the increased surcharge would be allocated to support domestic and sexual violence services, a **potential total of \$646,000 could be generated annually**.

The proposal impacts a limited number of Connecticut residents, including a number of non-residents who choose to get married at any number of premiere wedding venues in the state and therefore obtain a Connecticut marriage license.

### WHAT ARE OTHER STATES DOING?

While most states assess surcharges by county, some of Connecticut's neighboring states have increased their statewide surcharges to better support services, including:

- New Hampshire with a \$50 surcharge, \$43 of which funds domestic violence services
- Vermont with a \$60 surcharge, \$35 of which funds domestic violence and sexual assault services

*Please contact us with questions:*

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# OUR MEMBERS

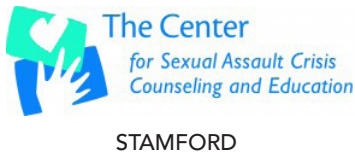
These are the organizations that will receive additional funding from any increase to the marriage license surcharge.

## DUAL ORGANIZATIONS:

(provide both domestic and sexual violence services)



## SEXUAL VIOLENCE ORGANIZATIONS:



## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ORGANIZATIONS:

