

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

**Chrysalis Domestic Violence Services**  
Meriden, CT

**New Horizons**  
Middletown, CT

**Prudence Crandall 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 B. Anthony Project**  
Torrington, CT

**Safe Haven**  
Waterbury, CT

**Domestic Violence Program United Services**  
Willimantic, CT

Testimony Regarding

**SB 13, AAC Fair Treatment of Incarcerated Women**

**HB 5040, AAC Adjudication of Certain Young Adults in Juvenile Court**

**Judiciary Committee  
March 21, 2018**

Good afternoon Senator Doyle, Senator Kissel, Representative Tong and members of the committee. CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) is the state's leading voice for victims of domestic violence and those who serve them. Our members provide essential services to nearly 40,000 victims of domestic violence each year. Services provided include 24-hour crisis response, emergency shelter, safety planning, counseling, agency/staff training, support groups and court advocacy.

**We support SB 13**

Many women defendants and inmates in Connecticut's criminal justice system have extensive histories of domestic violence. For some of these women, it is this victimization that results in issues such as homelessness, substance abuse and economic marginality that force them into survival by illegal means. According to the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, some women are coerced to engage in crime by battering partners or by partners' financial abuse, some are arrested for defending themselves against abuse, and others are arrested for not protecting their children from domestic violence. Oftentimes policies related to welfare, housing, immigration, drug enforcement, mandatory arrest, prosecution and sentencing further criminalize women's efforts to survive, escape and cope with abuse. Low-income women of color are most at risk for abuse and most at risk for being criminalized, entrapped and forced by abusive policies into the corrections system.

It is critical that women incarcerated within the Connecticut Dept. of Correction be treated fairly and provided with appropriate healthcare information and services, particularly those inmates who are pregnant. This bill also seeks to enhance visitation policies for inmates with children under the age of 18, which will serve as an important opportunity to strengthen their ability to parent successfully upon release. We urge your support.

**We support HB 5040 with the addition of protections for victims of domestic violence.**

We continue to support Governor Malloy's efforts to address the adjudication of certain young adults in juvenile court. However, we can only support these efforts if appropriate changes are made to statute that ensure the protection of victims of domestic violence committed by individuals who will be defined, according to this proposal, as a "young adult". This includes the same services that are currently provided to victims of domestic violence committed by 18, 19, and 20 year olds.

One major statutory change that must occur to ensure this level of protection is to change the definition of "family violence crime" which currently carves out delinquent

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acts. Amending the definition of “family violence crime” to carve out delinquent acts “committed by a person under the age of eighteen” will help ensure that many of the protections currently available to victims of family violence remain available to victims of “young adult” offenders regardless of the jurisdiction under which their case goes.

We thank the Governor for including an advocate for victims of family violence on the Juvenile Justice Policy & Oversight Committee (JJPOC) and explicitly requesting that JJPOC examine, as part of the planning process, “appropriate processes required for adjudication of young adults in juvenile court charged with sexual assault or with a crime involving family violence...and the services needed to support the victims of young adults in such cases.”

A number of proactive policies have been put in place over the years to increase offender accountability and victim safety when a family violence crime has been committed. It is critical that these protections remain in place for victims of “young adult” offenders:

- **Mandatory arrest** - §46b-38b(a) – “Whenever a peace officer determines upon speedy information that a family violence crime has been committed within such officer’s jurisdiction, such officer shall arrest the person or persons suspected of its commission and charge such person or persons with the appropriate crime.”
- **Next day arraignment** – §54-1g(a) – “Any arrested person who is not released sooner or who is charged with a family violence crime as defined in section 46b-38a... shall be promptly presented before the superior court sitting next regularly for the geographical area where the offense is alleged to have been committed.”
- **Nonfinancial conditions of release** – §54-63c(b) – “If the person is charged with the commission of a family violence crime, as defined in section 46b-38a...may impose nonfinancial conditions of release which may require that the arrested person do one or more of the following: (1) Avoid all contact with the alleged victim of the crime, (2) comply with specified restrictions on the person’s travel, association or place of abode that are directly related to the protection of the alleged victim of the crime, or (3) not use or possess a dangerous weapon, intoxicant or controlled substance.”
- **Family violence intervention units** - §46b-38c – “There shall be family violence response and intervention units in the Connecticut judicial system to respond to cases involving family violence. The units shall be coordinated and governed by formal agreement between the Chief State’s Attorney and the Judicial Department.”

Policymakers should also be cognizant of the availability of Family Violence Victim Advocates (FVVA) to assist victims of “young adult” offenders whose cases fall under the juvenile courts. CCADV and our 18 member organizations are currently funded through a combination of Judicial Branch Office of Victim Services Criminal Injuries Compensation funds and federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funds to provide victim advocacy in each of Connecticut’s criminal courts. There is currently no funding available to provide these services in juvenile court. We must ensure, through the planning process related to Raise the Age, that all victims of family violence crimes committed by “young adults” have timely access to the services provided by FVVAs including:

- Safety planning with a certified domestic violence counselor
- Advocacy to ensure that their voice and input are considered throughout the prosecution
- Readily available guidance on the court process, including their rights as a crime victim
- Information on additional community-based options, resources, and supports for victims of domestic violence

We would also like to point out that while there are a few exceptions to those acts committed by “youths and young adults” considered to be delinquent, including violation of a criminal protective or standing criminal protective order, criminal violation of a restraining order (§53a-223b) is not one of those exceptions. Under this proposal, individuals between the ages of 18-20 who violate a civil family violence restraining order will be considered to have committed a delinquent act. We urge that §53a-223b be added to the list of exceptions for delinquent acts found in §46b-120.

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Connecticut has made great strides in responding to family violence, prioritizing victim safety and offender accountability. We fully support evidence-based policy aimed at reducing recidivism, as this proposal does, and simply urge policymakers to carefully assess the infrastructure of the juvenile court system and the proposed statutory scheme to ensure that it meets the needs of all offenders and victims of family violence. We welcome the opportunity to participate in that work through the JJPOC.

Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions.

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