



Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence

## Testimony Supporting

### 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

## SB 394, AA Establishing a Council on Protecting Women's Health

### Public Health Committee

March 4, 2019

Good afternoon Senator Abrams, Representative Steinberg 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 18 member organizations 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, support groups and court advocacy.

### We urge your support of SB 394.

The proposed bill seeks to establish a council on protecting women's health to ensure quality health care for women. CCADV strongly believes that this bill should be passed because it is extremely important to victims of domestic violence (DV). Domestic violence directly affects the physical, mental, emotional, and sexual health of women on a daily basis. Health consequences of DV include anxiety, depression, pregnancy complications, sexually transmitted diseases, hypertension, substance abuse, and traumatic brain injury (TBI). Nationally 1 in 4 women have experienced severe physical violence by an intimate partner, and Futures Without Violence reports that 71% of DV survivors have experienced a TBI. The number of health consequences that women face, as a result of DV, leads to an increased utilization of health services. Averaging a lifetime cost of around \$103,767 per female victim of DV, according to the CDC.

It is essential that women have access to quality health care that fits their needs. With respect to federal laws related to healthcare, two key pieces of the Affordable Care Act include removing domestic violence as a pre-existing condition and covering screening and brief counseling for domestic violence under preventive health services. This means that the service is free to patients and health professionals can seek reimbursement, making it more likely that they'll complete the screening. CCADV and our national partners are committed to ensuring these benefits remain in place.

CCADV is in a position to serve as a unique resource for information related to women's health care because of our direct work with victims and the health care system. CCADV runs a Health Professional Outreach program that works directly with health professionals across the state to increase education on DV screening and intervention. Through this program we gain essential information about the barriers and needs of women who are trying to access the health care system.

CCADV would be happy to serve on the Council. As the states leading voice for victims of domestic violence we believe that we would play a vital role in reporting the needs and concerns of women across the state. Our Health Professional Outreach Program provides us with real time input on the barriers that women are facing when trying to access health care and this will make us a vital member of this council.

I strongly urge you to support victims of domestic violence by passing SB 394, An Act Establishing a Council on Protecting Women's Health. Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns.

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