



Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence

## Testimony Supporting

### HB 5222, An Act Expanding Eligibility in the Care4Kids Program for Homeless Families

Education Committee  
March 6, 2020

#### 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

Good afternoon Senator McCrory, Representative Sanchez 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 HB 5222.

This bill would establish Care 4 Kids eligibility for families that fit the HUD Category 1 definition of literally homeless or the Category 4 definition of fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence. This would help to address a barrier to employment for families experiencing homelessness, including victims of domestic violence. As of 2018 ten states guarantee child care subsidies for families experiencing homelessness and twenty-six states give priority to families experiencing homelessness in at least some circumstances.

Domestic violence is a leading cause of homelessness for women and children. Over 90% of women who are homeless have experienced severe physical or sexual violence at some point in their lives, and 63% have been victims of intimate partner violence as adults. Survivors may have to leave a dangerous situation quickly and have nowhere to go, or they may have faced financial abuse where they had no access to money. As a result, survivors of domestic violence often leave an abusive relationship with little or no resources and have to go into shelter. Last year in Connecticut, nearly 1,000 children, the majority of whom were 6 years old or younger, stayed in a domestic violence shelter with their parent.

After a survivor leaves an abusive relationship they need to work in order to support themselves and their families. The high cost of child care can make this difficult for survivors with young children. Finding or keeping a job can be challenging when survivors become the primary provider and cannot afford to have someone watch their child while they work.

Ensuring Care 4 Kids eligibility for families that are homeless would help make it easier for survivors to access a safe place to send their child while they work. This can relieve stress for the parent, allow them to work and earn the money necessary to support their child, and also provide an opportunity to support children that are homeless and have been exposed to domestic violence. Child care can offer a safe, stable environment for children and provide them an opportunity to create positive relationships with other adults and peers which helps to improve their social emotional development.

We strongly urge you to support HB5222 which would be one important way to support survivors of domestic violence in achieving independence.

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*For questions please contact Liza Andrews, Director of Public Policy & Communication, at landrews@ctcadv.org*