



Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence

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 Supporting

SB 274, AAC Concerning Funding for Planned Parenthood and other Family Planning Clinics

HB 5306, AAC Temporary State Services for Victims of Domestic Violence

Human Services Committee  
March 5, 2020

Good afternoon Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie 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.

**SB 274 - Support**

This bill would provide state funding for Title X family planning clinics that lost funding for choosing not to comply with federal requirements that would undermine the patient-provider relationship and prevent providers such as Planned Parenthood of Southern New England from providing high quality, medically accurate care to patients. Many individuals rely on free or low cost services provided by Title X clinics such as screening and treatment of STDs, HIV testing and counseling, access to birth control, and primary care services. Providing state funding would offset the loss of federal funds to Title X family planning clinics and allow them to continue providing these necessary health care services.

Family Planning clinics provide services to a wide range of individuals, many coming from disenfranchised groups. This includes victims of domestic violence who are at increased risk for reproductive coercion. Women experiencing physical abuse by an intimate partner are three times more likely to have a STI while women disclosing psychological abuse have nearly double the risk for a STI compared to women who have not been abused. Approximately one in five young women have experienced pregnancy coercion and one in seven have experienced active interference with contraception. Family planning clinics are able to provide victims with treatment options and resources to address these issues and help put them more in control of their reproductive health.

Assessments for reproductive coercion are one of the resources that family planning clinics can use to support victims of domestic violence. These assessments have been associated with a 70% reduction in pregnancy coercion. Women in family planning clinics who received both assessment and counseling on harm reduction strategies were 60% more likely to end a relationship because it felt unhealthy or unsafe. Family planning clinics are an important way to connect with victims of domestic violence and offer support that can help them to improve their safety.

SB 274 would help to ensure that family planning clinics receive necessary funding that will allow them to continue providing critical reproductive healthcare services.

**HB 5306 - Support**

This bill provides critical economic justice for victims of domestic violence. Section one of this bill would expedited access to SNAP benefits for victims of domestic violence and provide temporary benefits for ninety days before redetermining

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eligibility. Additionally, this proposal would prevent the income of their abuser from being considered as part of their eligibility determination. Section two would temporarily waive the Care 4 Kids income standard for victims of domestic violence for ninety days. And section three would prevent an abuser's income from being considered for ninety days when a victim of domestic violence applies for cash assistance.

1 in 4 women experience domestic violence and financial abuse occurs in 99% of domestic violence cases. Financial abuse can include forbidding the victim to work or sabotaging work opportunities, not allowing the victim access to bank accounts and controlling how money is spent, refusing to pay child support, or manipulating the divorce process. This is a major barrier for victims of domestic violence who many choose to stay in the relationship instead of face poverty.

Allowing victims of domestic violence quicker and easier access to SNAP, Care 4 Kids, and cash assistance temporarily would give them critical support while attempting to end an abusive relationship. Victims would more readily receive these services for ninety days which would allow them access to food, child care, and cash assistance without relying on their abuser. This would provide important resources as they begin taking steps to support themselves and their children independently.

Including an abuser's income in the eligibility determination for SNAP, Care 4 Kids, and cash assistance can keep the victim dependent on the abuser. The victim may be denied services because the abuser's income is too high even though they may be eligible on their own, but they can't begin to take the steps to leave until they begin receiving these services. Including the abuser's income does not provide an accurate picture of the victim's financial situation. Preventing an abuser's income from being included as part of a victim's eligibility determination would help victims access services that could help them leave the relationship and successfully support themselves on their own.

HB 5306 would allow victims of domestic violence temporary services that would help minimize barriers to leaving an abusive relationship.

Tess Leone  
Intern  
UConn MSW '20

*For questions please contact Liza Andrews, Director of Public Policy & Communication, at [landrews@ctcadv.org](mailto:landrews@ctcadv.org)*