



90 Pitkin Street
East Hartford, CT 06108
(860) 282-7899
(860) 282-7892 Fax
(800) 281-1481 (CT only)

Member Shelter Programs

The Umbrella
Ansonia, CT

The Center for Women & Families
Bridgeport, CT

Women's Center
Danbury, CT

United Services, Inc.
Domestic Violence Programs
Dayville, CT

Network Against Domestic Abuse
Enfield, CT

Greenwich YWCA
Domestic Abuse Service
Greenwich, CT

Interval House
Hartford, CT

Meriden-Wallingford Chrysalis
Meriden, CT

New Horizons
Middletown, CT

Prudence Crandall Center
New Britain, CT

Domestic Violence Services
New Haven, CT

Women's Center of SE CT
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

United Services, Inc.
Domestic Violence Programs
Willimantic, CT

To: Judiciary Committee

From: Linda Blozie
Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Date: November 27, 2007

Re: An Act Concerning Home Invasion, Career Criminals,
Community Supervision and Information Sharing Resources

Good afternoon Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Linda Blozie and I am the Director of Public Affairs for the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Today I am here to speak in support of an Act Concerning Home Invasion, Career Criminals, Community Supervision and Information Sharing Resources. In particular, CCADV is supporting Section 21 which relates to the provision of domestic violence advocates in both criminal and civil courts across Connecticut.

Each time there is an act of violence in this state, there is a victim. And more often than not, the victimization of one person also affects many others who live with, work with and care about that person. Over the next few months, I imagine that sweeping changes will be made about the way offenders are sentenced, paroled and incarcerated. When making these changes, I would ask you to give equal attention to the needs of victims.

Each year, the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence houses approximately 2,000 women and children who are seeking safety from their abusive partners. Last year alone, CCADV's member programs responded to 24,288 crisis calls, met with 13,700 adults and 928 children, and received 36,658 referrals from the criminal courts to assist victims. And each year, between twenty and twenty five individuals are killed by their intimate partner.

When victims go to court, they generally do not have an idea of what will happen. They find the process to be extremely intimidating. They need someone there to advocate for them, to express their concerns to the court. They do not know that they have the option of addressing the court at sentencing or that the advocate can address the court on their behalf. Advocates can help to explain the court process, advocate for a victim's wishes, assist them in preparing a victim impact statement, notify them of the outcome of the court date, and address any concerns that come up for them between court dates. Family Violence Victims Advocates are in place in the criminal courts but the same level of attention is needed for domestic violence victims seeking civil remedies and for those specialized docket courts in New Britain, New London and Norwalk.

For the past five years, CCADV and its members programs have also been working to increase access to emergency shelter and support services for victims of domestic violence. Presently, all domestic violence programs only have on site staff from 9:00 am-5:00 pm, Monday through Friday and limited evening and weekend hours. The remaining time, there is one person who is "on call" to respond to the 24 hour hotline and to go to the shelter if any extraordinary emergencies arise. Yet, each and every day, those of us who work with victims of domestic

understand that there are large blocks of time when we are not providing support and safety for women and children residing at our shelters. Our worst nightmare is that an abuser will find one of our shelters and assault if not kill his partner.

Victims of domestic violence deserve an immediate response when they are seeking help. There is often a small window of opportunity for them to leave an abusive relationship. The longer the response time, the greater their safety risk. Victims of domestic violence should have instant access to emergency shelter and support services and never should there be a time when an emergency shelter in this state is left unattended.

Last year alone, 54,641 victims of domestic violence received some type of assistance from their local program. We know that there are other victims who need our help, yet due to limited resources, we are unable to assist them.

When you make your recommendations, please consider helping victims to access not only an advocate in the courts but also support services 24 hours each and every day by allocating an additional funding to support the work that is needed for all victims of domestic violence in Connecticut.

Thank you.