

To ensure that domestic violence survivors and their children are able to achieve safety and stability, CCADV has identified five areas in which to strengthen policies and practices.

## CRITICAL FUNDING FOR THE STATEWIDE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE

CCADV and our 18 member organizations are requesting **\$1,000,000** in state funding through the **Department of Social Services** to support **Safe Connect, Connecticut's statewide domestic violence hotline**.



Each year, CCADV and our 18 member organizations provide life-saving services to nearly 40,000 domestic violence survivors and their children. Like many states, Connecticut has relied heavily on federal funding to fund victim services, through the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA). This funding has become unstable. In her October 2024 update, the director of the Office for Victims of Crime, a department within the U.S. Department of Justice, shared her concerns about the fund's solvency. More than ever, survivors and their children need the State of Connecticut to prioritize funding for the programs that ensure they can find safety and build lives free from violence.

Requested state funding will support Safe Connect, the state's 24/7 domestic violence hotline which handles approximately 25,000 contacts annually. Since its launch in 2019, Safe Connect has been fully funded by VOCA, which will no longer be possible as any VOCA funding that remains available for domestic violence will be used to support court- and community-based advocates at CCADV's 18 member organizations. Prior to Safe Connect, each individual CCADV member organization was responsible for providing 24/7 hotline coverage but did not receive any funding to do so. Safe Connect provides a single, coordinated, statewide entry point for domestic violence services, which is key to a successful survivor-centered, trauma-informed service system in Connecticut.

## EQUITABLE, RESPONSIVE LEGAL SYSTEM



The court system, both criminal and civil, plays a crucial role in the safety of survivors and their children. It is critical for judges and court personnel to understand the dynamics of domestic violence, the needs of survivors, and the further harm the courts may cause when failing to respond to those needs. We strive for a survivor-centered system that holds those who cause harm accountable. When safe and appropriate, we support community-based options that reduce incarceration and address systemic racial inequities.

### WE SUPPORT

- ✓ The Domestic Violence Survivor Justice Act, which creates trauma-informed sentencing policies that address the criminalization of survivors.
- ✓ Enhanced family court infrastructure that accurately assesses and addresses domestic violence within divorce and custody matters.
- ✓ Access to low-cost or free legal representation.
- ✓ Increased opportunities for survivor notification and participation in the criminal justice system.

### WE OPPOSE

- ✗ Policies that increase the cost of litigation and jeopardize the ability of pro se survivors to achieve equal justice.
- ✗ Policies that over-criminalize and exacerbate racial disparities within criminal justice systems.
- ✗ Measures seeking to expand the penal code when existing statute sufficiently criminalizes the act.

For questions or additional information, please contact:

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## PREVENTION, HEALTH & WELL-BEING

Domestic violence is a public health crisis with survivors facing increased risk for many negative health outcomes. This is particularly true for pregnant and postpartum survivors. A recent CCADV report demonstrated that in Connecticut, between 2015 and 2021, nearly a third of individuals who died during a pregnancy or within one year of the end of a pregnancy had experienced intimate partner violence in their lives. It is critical that we engage in more prevention.



### WE SUPPORT

- ✓ Strong policies that ensure access to reproductive healthcare and protections for abortion care providers.
- ✓ Equitable access to healthcare for LGBTQ+ individuals.
- ✓ Increased availability and accessibility of mental and physical healthcare, as well as affordable insurance.
- ✓ Opportunities to strengthen prevention with youth.
- ✓ Efforts to reduce gun violence.

### WE OPPOSE

- ✗ Policies that limit a person's right to access sexual and reproductive healthcare services, including abortion care.
- ✗ Transphobic and trans-exclusionary policies that make it even harder for these survivors to seek help.

## ECONOMIC JUSTICE & SELF-SUFFICIENCY



Research confirms that almost every survivor of domestic violence has experienced economic abuse. One of the most common and powerful tactics that abusers use to keep victims dependent, economic abuse falls into three main categories: preventing resource use, preventing resource acquisition, and exploiting a partner's resources. One of the best predictors of whether a survivor will be able to stay away from their abuser is the degree of their economic independence.

### WE SUPPORT

- ✓ Financial empowerment and equal pay initiatives.
- ✓ A permanent child tax credit and increased availability and accessibility to affordable childcare that supports a survivor's ability to work or go to school.
- ✓ Expanded access to public benefits and affordable, healthcare, including for undocumented survivors.

### WE OPPOSE

- ✗ Policies that complicate the processes, procedures, or qualifications necessary to obtain financial and social supports.
- ✗ Requirements that jeopardize the unique safety and privacy needs of survivors.
- ✗ Barriers to pathways to citizenship.

## SAFE, STABLE, & AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Domestic violence is the leading cause of homelessness for women and children. Survivors face unique barriers to finding safe, stable, and affordable housing. The process is often hindered by a retaliatory abuser, leaving survivors with a history of evictions or inclusion on a "do not rent" list. Black women and children are more likely to have evictions filed against them, creating a racial and gender housing crisis.



### WE SUPPORT

- ✓ Increased availability and accessibility to affordable housing options in all towns and cities.
- ✓ Access to flexible funding without strings attached.
- ✓ Housing insecurity responses that are flexible to center the unique safety and privacy needs of survivors.

### WE OPPOSE

- ✗ Policies that discriminate against or penalize survivors, particularly for the actions of their abuser.
- ✗ Policies that perpetuate racial disparities in housing and increase the eviction crisis impacting marginalized communities.

## OUR MEMBERS



BRIDGEPORT



DANBURY



DAYVILLE/WILLIMANTIC



ENFIELD



GREENWICH



HARTFORD



NEW BRITAIN



NEW HAVEN/SHELTON



TORRINGTON



LAKEVILLE



MERIDEN



MIDDLETOWN



NEW LONDON



NORWALK/STAMFORD



WATERBURY