

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

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House Bill 59

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House Judiciary Committee

Irvis Office Building
Room G-50
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Tuesday, August 12, 2008 - 10:00 a.m.

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BEFORE:

Honorable Thomas Caltagirone, Majority Chairman
Honorable Sean Ramaley
Honorable Glen Grell
Honorable Katie True

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1 ALSO PRESENT:

2

 John Ryan

3 Majority Executive Director

4

 Jetta Hartman

5 Majority Committee Sec./Leg. Asst.

6

 Karen Coates, Esquire

7 Minority Ex. Director and Counsel

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 Michelle Moore

9 Minority Admin. Asst./Committee Sec.

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(Written testimony submitted by:

Jacquelyn M. Albert, LCSW, Executive Director
Domestic Violence Services of Fayette County,
Inc.

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(SWIC) Schuylkill Women in Crisis

Pam Russel, Executive Director
Turning Point of Lehigh County, Inc.

Jo Ellen Bowman, LSW, Executive Director
(HAVIN) Helping All Victims In Need

1 WRITTEN TESTIMONY SUBMITTED BY (CONT'D)

2

(Written testimony submitted by:

3

4 Jill Marsilio-Colonna, MS, Executive Director
Women's Center of Beaver County

5

6 Kathlene S. Russell, Executive Director
The Women's Center, Inc. of Columbia/Montour

7

8 Deborah Donahue, Executive Director
Domestic Violence Services of Cumberland & Perry
9 Counties

10

11 Gladys Brown, Victim of domestic violence
Domestic Violence Services of Cumberland & Perry
12 Counties

12

13 Dr. Anette M. DeNardo, Chair
(DVS) Domestic Violence Services of Fayette
14 County, Inc.

15

16 Gina M. D'Auria, Caseworker Manager
Fayette County Children and Youth Services
Board Member
17 Domestic Violence Service of Fayette County

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1 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: In the House
2 Judiciary Committee, we are going to be holding
3 a hearing today on House Bill 59, Representative
4 Tom Killion. And for the benefit of the
5 stenographer, I would like the members to
6 introduce themselves, and the staff, starting to
7 my left.

8 REPRESENTATIVE RAMALEY: Good
9 morning. Sean Ramaley, 16th District, Beaver
10 and Allegheny counties.

11 REPRESENTATIVE GRELL: Good morning.
12 Glen Grell, 87th District, Cumberland County.

13 MS. COATES: Good morning. Karen
14 Coates, counsel to the House Judiciary
15 Committee.

16 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: Tom
17 Caltagirone, 127th District, Berks County.

18 MR. RYAN: John Ryan, Democratic
19 Executive Director for the Committee.

20 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: And I do have
21 several pieces of written testimony that I would
22 like to submit for the public record that has
23 been submitted.

24 Katie True is now entering. Good
25 morning, Katie.

1 We have Domestic Violence Services of
2 Fayette County and also the Schuylkill Women In
3 Crisis, Turning Point--I am going to submit all
4 of this to the stenographer for the public
5 record--Beaver County and several others. So I
6 will hand this over to you so that you make it a
7 part of the official record.

8 And I will start off with
9 Representative Killion.

10 REPRESENTATIVE KILLION: Thank you,
11 Mr. Chairman. And I'll be fairly brief. It's
12 nice to hear the folks who are going to testify
13 today. I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman,
14 for holding this hearing and also thank you for
15 being a co-sponsor of the legislation.

16 I served--prior to being elected in
17 the legislature--as a member of the Delaware
18 County Council, and I also served on the
19 Domestic Abuse Project at Delaware County for
20 six years as a member of their board, and I saw
21 firsthand the great work they do.

22 And one of the problems they face,
23 not just Del. Co. DAP but the other DAPs
24 throughout the state, is that funding has been
25 flat at the state and federal level while costs

1 have increased dramatically. We have all seen
2 that. And because of that, it's much harder for
3 you just to operate. The boards have now been
4 collecting harder, to raise money privately,
5 which they do aggressively.

6 What this legislation does, it
7 increases the fee for a marriage license and
8 brings in a new fee for a divorce filing to
9 provide a dedicated funding base throughout the
10 state for these programs.

11 I believe it's a great -- I am not
12 one to want to raise taxes or raise fees, but,
13 in this case, I think it's a good bang for our
14 buck. I know our own DAP, Delaware County, and
15 what you'll hear a little later about the
16 services and the number of people they help, but
17 it has about less than 30 employees but over 60
18 active volunteers. So there is almost a
19 multiplier effect for the little bit of public
20 money that goes into these agencies with -- for
21 the free help they get, from folks that
22 volunteer, former victims of domestic abuse, or
23 family members of victims, or people that are
24 just interested in the issue.

25 I think you will hear, from the

1 testifiers today, how important these agencies
2 are to our constituents but in all of our
3 counties. And I am pleased to be here to listen
4 to them. And again, I would like to thank you,
5 Mr. Chairman, for holding this committee hearing
6 on House Bill 59. Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: Thank you,
8 Tom. I would like to next hear from Susan
9 Kelly-Dreiss, Executive Director of the
10 Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic
11 Violence.

12 MS. KELLY-DREISS: Good morning.

13 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: Excuse me.
14 Tom, do you want to come up here and join us
15 here as part of the panel?

16 REPRESENTATIVE KILLION: (Complies.)

17 MS. KELLY-DREISS: Good morning, and
18 I want to thank the Chairman for this
19 opportunity to address the Judiciary Committee,
20 and I want to thank Representative Killion for
21 being the lead sponsor on this bill.

22 I have been with the Pennsylvania
23 Coalition for 30 years, I am a founding
24 executive director, and I can't come before you
25 without mentioning what we have done in

1 Pennsylvania because this state really has been
2 the leader in the country.

3 So during these 30 years, we have
4 seen enormous changes from the time where there
5 were no services, no laws, to the creation of a
6 statewide network of programs, to laws that now
7 better protect victims, and to the development
8 of improved responses from systems such as the
9 legal system, health care, and all other systems
10 as well.

11 Those who work in this field will
12 tell you how important these changes have been.
13 The creation of a place for victims to go has
14 been essential.

15 When I was growing up in Pittsburgh,
16 I lived in a home where there was violence. And
17 I watched as my mother sought help from law
18 enforcement, from health care. And there was no
19 place for her to go, no place for her to call.
20 So the creation of these services has been so
21 essential for thousands.

22 And we counted, several years ago, a
23 million, over a million victims who have gotten
24 help through these kinds of services.

25 We have, as a coalition, come before

1 this General Assembly many times. I think in
2 1976, when you started, Chairman, I first met
3 you. So I know it's been a long time.

4 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: A long time.

5 MS. KELLY-DREISS: We worked on the
6 Protection From Abuse Act together. And there
7 have been numerous other laws such as probable
8 cause arrest. So this coalition has really
9 worked -- is a partner with the General
10 Assembly.

11 And we have also worked very well
12 with the different departments of state and in
13 particular with the Department of Public
14 Welfare. And I am thinking that, today, we may
15 expect to see a representative, Joanne Grossi,
16 from the Department of Public Welfare.

17 The first state funding for domestic
18 violence services started in 1982, and that was
19 when the General Assembly passed the Domestic
20 Violence and Rape Crisis Services Act, and that
21 was really cutting edge for that time.

22 That act established that there would
23 be a stable funding stream for domestic violence
24 and rape crisis services based on creating a
25 mechanism for funding. And that mechanism is a

1 ten dollar fine that's attached to all crimes
2 that are pleaded either guilty or nolo
3 contendere, and that goes into the general
4 revenue and then is allocated to the Department
5 of Public Welfare.

6 That was a tremendous boost for
7 services that in those days were just getting
8 started. At that time, there were twenty-six
9 programs. Now there are sixty-one programs. So
10 you can also understand how the need for the
11 increase in dollars has followed.

12 The kinds of services we are talking
13 about have grown as well. So in addition to the
14 numbers of services, what those services
15 provide, has grown from counseling and shelter
16 to include hotlines, all kinds of advocacy
17 programs, community education programs, training
18 programs, and many programs have bridge housing
19 as well.

20 Because there was a growing demand
21 for services, we then came to the General
22 Assembly in 1990 and asked for help. And the
23 General Assembly passed an additional fee to the
24 marriage license which was Act 222. That ten
25 dollar surcharge on marriage licenses now, on an

1 annual basis, collect seven hundred and
2 thirty-three thousand dollars statewide, so that
3 also goes into this pool of funding for domestic
4 violence services.

5 The combination of general revenue,
6 the Act 44 and Act 222 result in twenty-one
7 thousand dollars when you combine it with
8 federal funding. The state funding comes to
9 twelve million, six hundred and twenty-five
10 thousand.

11 So I have provided some charts in
12 here which may be helpful in just looking at
13 what the funding sources are. When we first
14 started this kind of funding, the match
15 requirement that was based upon the federal
16 funding was a seventy-five/twenty-five percent
17 match, it was very typical, based on Title 20
18 funding.

19 Over the years because the programs'
20 needs have grown and the funding has been
21 decreasing, this has really flipped around. We
22 now see programs raising sixty-eight percent of
23 their funding. As Representative Killion said,
24 it's really very difficult to operate these
25 programs and then at the same time be doing

1 fundraising for them.

2 So sixty-eight percent now comes from
3 local sources and twenty-four percent is coming
4 from the state and federal combined.

5 Of course, to make matters worse, we
6 see that all costs are increasing, and that
7 includes the costs for the shelter, the fuel
8 bills, but the one that is most noticeable when
9 we talk to programs is the cost for food. Those
10 costs have gone up enormously.

11 And you can picture yourself, every
12 night, at your own dinner table, inviting, say,
13 twenty to twenty-five people to come in and to
14 have dinner and they have no resources of their
15 own, they can't bring, you know, something to
16 the table, they have to be fed at that location.
17 So this has really been enormously challenging
18 for our programs to continue to operate while
19 their funds are not just leveling but they have
20 been reducing.

21 Some of the stories that these
22 programs talk about is how they are cutting all
23 of their community education programs. They may
24 get requests, but they have had to cut that
25 particular staff person.

1 Overall, statewide, we have seen
2 community education's programs drop by eighty
3 percent, and this is really a shame because a
4 lot of those programs were reaching out to
5 children in school. And we know, we believed
6 that we need to get these messages to children
7 about having nonviolent resolution conflict, but
8 the funding has really cut those programs.

9 To this point, currently, we have
10 been doing needs assessments for all of the
11 programs statewide. Our last needs assessment
12 was done in '05-'06. We know now that we need
13 at least an increase of six million eight
14 hundred thousand dollars. We are seeing over
15 ninety-two thousand victims a year. That is for
16 confidential and free services.

17 And I have attached to the testimony
18 in the back some of the statistics. You will
19 see that county by county. So for your
20 particular program that's included.

21 But statewide, we are seeing, as I
22 said, ninety-two thousand victims, we provide
23 two hundred and ten thousand days of shelter,
24 five hundred thousand hours of counseling, and
25 as Representative Killion mentioned, we have

1 volunteers that we are constantly training.

2 And those volunteers really do
3 supplement what we can do in terms of staffing.
4 Last year, we had two hundred and thirty-seven
5 thousand hours provided by volunteers.

6 Now, House Bill 59 comes at a time
7 when the funding is being cut, the Consumer
8 Price Index shows prices are being increased,
9 but we are still operating the same kinds of
10 services. So the importance of this bill is one
11 that I can't stress too much.

12 We think that this is a really
13 legitimate resource. We looked at other states
14 and we found that thirty-six other states have a
15 marriage license surcharge just like this one.
16 And, in fact, we count Pennsylvania among those
17 states because we have had it for nineteen
18 years.

19 So it's not new. This is an existing
20 fee. We would be increasing that fee. It would
21 go from the current ten dollars up to
22 thirty-five dollars so it's an increase of
23 twenty-five dollars.

24 Also, the divorce filing fees,
25 currently Pennsylvania has a fifty cent tax on

1 all divorce filings. There is also a ten dollar
2 fee for the children's trust fund and ten
3 dollars for the judicial computer system. This
4 would be adding to that as well. It would add
5 twenty-five dollars to the divorce filing fee.

6 We anticipate from these two sources
7 of revenue an additional two point eight million
8 dollars coming for domestic violence services.

9 Now, we know we have heard some
10 criticisms and Representative Killion pointed
11 out that there are many people who don't want to
12 see new taxes. We are really asking you to look
13 at this as an existing fee that we are
14 increasing; it has been there for nearly twenty
15 years.

16 Also, when we look at other charges
17 for getting married, for example, and we went to
18 one of those thick wedding books that you see in
19 the stores where you buy magazines, and the
20 American Wedding Survey has calculated that the
21 average cost of a wedding is twenty-eight
22 thousand dollars.

23 So we know many weddings that cost a
24 lot more than twenty-eight thousand dollars, but
25 we think that this additional twenty-five

1 dollars, when you look at the context of a
2 wedding cost, is very minor and it certainly
3 won't prohibit any couples from getting married.

4 We believe that even if one would
5 argue that this is a tax, even if that argument
6 was held too, our programs are important
7 services. We are providing essential
8 life-saving services for all of the citizens of
9 this commonwealth. We stay open three
10 sixty-five, twenty-four hours a day. All
11 holidays, we are there.

12 One of the programs from Schuylkill
13 Women in Crisis wrote a letter that's included
14 in this group, and she says we understand the
15 domestic violence programs are not alone in
16 facing funding cuts. Although, few, if any, are
17 expected to take injured and fearful families,
18 take them in with nothing more than the clothes
19 on their backs.

20 We feed, clothe them, shelter them,
21 determine if they have serious injuries and make
22 arrangements to go to get help. We arrange
23 legal, housing and education and workplace
24 assistance. We keep them safe and hidden, if
25 they need to be. We counsel them to heal and

1 grow stronger. We do it all each year free and
2 with diminishing resources.

3 We really believe that this is one of
4 those essential resources that is not taking a
5 lot of funding. We are coming before you,
6 creating a revenue stream that we hope you will
7 support, and we really ask the Chair to vote on
8 this bill and put it out for a vote in the House
9 when they return. Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: Thank you.

11 Let me just say this on the scheduling. I think
12 you all know that we are not sure if we are even
13 going to be coming back after the election,
14 number one. The Senate has already indicated
15 that they will not. We would have approximately
16 nine days left.

17 What I think will probably happen--
18 and, you know, I am just trying to project in
19 the future--I don't think we are going to be
20 able to get many of the House bills out. I
21 mean, in those nine days, to be very honest with
22 you.

23 What I would strongly suggest -- And
24 I do believe in this and I accept the
25 responsibility, but I am a little bit remiss

1 that we didn't deal with this sooner in the last
2 year. And I will make this commitment and
3 promise to you now, that Tom will reintroduce
4 this bill in January. That if we are still in
5 the majority and I can shepherd this bill out of
6 the committee, you have my commitment that I
7 will do that for you. Notwithstanding, you
8 know, who is going to be in control.

9 And I can't speak for my counterpart
10 Ronnie, but I will make that commitment to you
11 all, right here today, and also to Tom, that I
12 think this is a very worthwhile bill, I think
13 it's needed, and I think you made your case as
14 far as the funding stream and the good work.

15 And Berks Women in Crisis is right on
16 the same floor where I am located in the Reading
17 office and so I only knew too well the good work
18 that all of the groups statewide do. So I make
19 that pledge to you today.

20 And hopefully -- You know, I don't
21 want to build up false hopes. I can't predict
22 who is going to do what. Because in all
23 probability, the bill will go to Appropriations
24 and therein for fiscal code (phonetic). Of
25 course, the Administration will weigh in on this

1 and other groups, and you know how that battle
2 can be.

3 But if we can, I would like to be
4 able to have this reintroduced in January. With
5 Tom's approval, I will certainly go on as
6 co-sponsor and get this out as soon as possible.

7 With only nine days left and knowing
8 full well that the Senate will probably not take
9 up many of the House bills, other than bills
10 that are extremely urgent like the wire tap bill
11 as an example, it runs out at the end of the
12 year, I don't think we are going to have a lot
13 of time to do much. But I make that commitment
14 to you today.

15 Questions from the panel?

16 REPRESENTATIVE GRELL: Thank you. I
17 have two questions. One, could you provide us
18 with some information about the amount that
19 other states charge for their marriage license
20 charge? You gave us a number of how many other
21 states have a surcharge, but if you could share
22 with us what the range of those amounts is so
23 that we can see where ten dollars is versus
24 twenty-five.

25 MS. KELLY-DREISS: We would be glad

1 to do that. I don't have it with me today --

2 REPRESENTATIVE GRELL: That's fine.

3 MS. KELLY-DREISS: -- but we will get
4 that for you, Representative Grell.

5 When we looked at it two years ago,
6 this twenty-five dollars was in the ballpark.
7 But, you know, I think that --

8 REPRESENTATIVE GRELL: Right.

9 MS. KELLY-DREISS: -- there have been
10 some other states that have passed laws since
11 then. So we will get that information.

12 REPRESENTATIVE GRELL: I think that
13 could help a lot of us figure out how much that
14 increase, it is. If it is, in fact. However
15 you want to characterize it.

16 The second question. Can you give us
17 a little insight on how this money is currently
18 allocated among your network of providers and
19 whether that would change at all under
20 Representative Killion's bill?

21 If this additional fund is raised,
22 how can we be confident that the agencies that
23 we work with in our local communities will get
24 their fair share of the additional funding? Or
25 how are those decisions made?

1 MS. KELLY-DREISS: Well, those
2 decisions are in its final form of the decision
3 making, one, of the Department of Public
4 Welfare. And the coalition does work with the
5 Department of Public Welfare. At the present
6 time, we are working with them on a funding
7 formula. In fact, we have a meeting set up next
8 week with Secretary Richmond.

9 What the -- Act 157, whenever it was
10 passed, I think it was a wise draft -- wisely
11 drafted act because it talks in that bill about
12 how the funding should be distributed based on
13 population, the number of victims served, the
14 geographic area, and the amount of sources,
15 other sources, not just the state sources but
16 other sources.

17 So Pennsylvania Coalition is
18 committed to making sure that that is
19 implemented, whatever formula is developed. So
20 we have seen some beginning discussion points on
21 a formula, and I know that the population was
22 included in that as well as the number of
23 victims served.

24 REPRESENTATIVE GRELL: If I could
25 just follow up on that.

1 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: Yes.

2 REPRESENTATIVE GRELL: In terms of
3 the local match or the local participation or
4 other resources that are available, if the
5 locality has other resources available through
6 private fundraising, does that hurt them in
7 terms of accessing this money?

8 MS. KELLY-DREISS: Not at all.

9 REPRESENTATIVE GRELL: Or does it
10 help them?

11 MS. KELLY-DREISS: No, certainly, it
12 does not hurt them.

13 REPRESENTATIVE GRELL: But does it
14 help them?

15 MS. KELLY-DREISS: It does help them.
16 Yes, we do --

17 REPRESENTATIVE GRELL: Well, it helps
18 them meet their budget, but does it help them
19 get an appropriate share of the state or federal
20 funding?

21 MS. KELLY-DREISS: Well, I would say
22 that we have to review. Because we are the
23 statewide administrator of these funds, we have
24 to make sure that there are other sources of
25 funding. There is no ratio like there used to

1 be, the seventy-five/twenty-five. That is not
2 in existence any more. And that was a federal
3 requirement at the time, it was under Title 20.

4 We do look to see if there are other
5 sources. And, you know, this group of
6 grassroots programs -- And I know yours, because
7 I have run into Deb Donahue in the Farmer's
8 Market many times, when she is sitting at her
9 booth, they have the most creative ways of
10 fundraising. So we have never required that.

11 But we do look to make sure that
12 there are other funds. Because obviously at
13 this point with the funds diminishing,
14 especially in the last seven years, it has been
15 the local funds that have kept the doors open.

16 REPRESENTATIVE GRELL: I just recall
17 that there was a lot of excitement, I guess two
18 years ago, when there was a fairly significant
19 increase in state funding, but it all seemed to
20 go to one place.

21 MS. KELLY-DREISS: Yes.

22 REPRESENTATIVE GRELL: I would hope
23 that we don't add additional funds to a pot that
24 ends up not benefiting all of the programs, at
25 least in some fashion.

1 So if you could keep us up to speed
2 on where those discussions are on the formula
3 that would make--I will just speak for
4 myself--that would make me feel more comfortable
5 in voting for a fee increase. If you don't want
6 to call it a tax increase, a fee increase.

7 MS. KELLY-DREISS: All right. Well,
8 we will do that. Thank you.

9 REPRESENTATIVE GRELL: Thank you very
10 much.

11 MS. KELLY-DREISS: We agree with you.

12 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: Katie, do you
13 have anything you wanted to ask?

14 REPRESENTATIVE TRUE: Thank you, Mr.
15 Chairman. Good morning.

16 MS. KELLY-DREISS: Good morning.

17 REPRESENTATIVE TRUE: It's nice to
18 see you here. I was just curious. And maybe
19 now Representative Killion could fill me in
20 also. Any counterpart in the Senate that is
21 supportive of this idea?

22 Because, you know, what we hear over
23 here, and kind of based on what Representative
24 Grell has said, you know, maybe, well, the
25 message is being said that we are not going to

1 take up anything that is new fees or new taxes
2 on their side. Things kind of --

3 MS. KELLY-DREISS: Um-hum.

4 REPRESENTATIVE TRUE: You know, if we
5 can commit to getting it out of the House, and
6 then, as I concur with what Representative
7 Caltagirone said, for the fall and next term.
8 Do we have any support in the Senate?

9 REPRESENTATIVE KILLION: I have
10 spoken to both of the senators from Delaware
11 County and they're supportive but--and one is in
12 leadership--could not make a commitment at this
13 point as far as whether the votes are there.

14 I think if -- Well, you know, my job
15 as well as some of the other folks, to work
16 them. And it's going to take some work. And I
17 agree with the Chairman on the timing. I
18 appreciate greatly his comments. And I think,
19 you know, as we get into the next Session,
20 hopefully I will still be around. I don't --
21 (inaudible).

22 REPRESENTATIVE TRUE: Most definitely
23 you will.

24 REPRESENTATIVE KILLION: It's going
25 to be -- We are going to have to work. There is

1 a knee-jerk reaction, many times in the Senate,
2 that if there is a fee attached, it's just not
3 without looking at the merits as to, you know,
4 what the return on the dollars are and what
5 services are provided for the dollars. So we
6 have got some work to do.

7 REPRESENTATIVE TRUE: Well, I just --
8 Well, my comment is that we have all worked, we
9 have all been told many times on these issues
10 that, you know, certain people won't support it
11 and so forth and so on. And with a great deal
12 of work, it can be done. So that just gives me
13 a starting point.

14 But it certainly has a lot of merit,
15 and I think if people are educated, politically
16 as well as, you know, just on the issue, perhaps
17 it could be brought about. But I wish you well.

18 MS. KELLY-DREISS: Thank you and we
19 will do our best to educate. Thank you.

20 REPRESENTATIVE TRUE: Thank you, Mr.
21 Chairman.

22 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: Thank you.
23 Any other questions?

24 (No response.)

25 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: Thank you very

1 much. We appreciate your testimony.

2 MS. KELLY-DREISS: Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: We will next
4 hear from Rita Buckley Connolly, Executive
5 Director of Domestic Abuse Project of Delaware
6 County, Incorporated.

7 MS. CONNOLLY: Thank you, Mr.
8 Chairman. Good morning to the other members of
9 the committee and to our dear friend,
10 Representative Killion, from Delaware County.

11 My name is Rita Buckley Connolly, and
12 I have served as the Executive Director of the
13 Domestic Abuse Project of Delaware County,
14 commonly known as DAP, since 2002. DAP is a
15 thirty-two-year-old nonprofit agency and the
16 sole provider of domestic violence services to
17 nearly five thousand victims each year.

18 Our service area includes each of the
19 forty-nine townships and boroughs of the county,
20 with a population of about five hundred and
21 fifty thousand.

22 Our main office is in Media, just a
23 block from the courthouse. Our emergency
24 shelter is just minutes away. And we also
25 maintain a satellite office in the City of

1 Chester and a fourth location in the Lawrence
2 Park Shopping Center in Broomall, where we
3 operate a revenue-generating thrift store,
4 proceeds from which all support the agency's
5 operations.

6 DAP is a one point seven million
7 agency staffed by twenty-one full time and five
8 part time and some sixty-five active volunteers.
9 The agency is governed by a sixteen-person
10 volunteer board and is recognized by a host of
11 external reviewers and funders as possessing
12 exemplary organizational capacity, especially in
13 the areas of private fund development, contract
14 management and financial management.

15 And, additionally, it's been
16 commended for providing a full complement of
17 programs and services, working with a variety of
18 federal, state and local funding sources, not
19 the least of which is our lead funder, the
20 Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic
21 Violence, the U.S. Department of Housing and
22 Urban Development, the Pennsylvania Commission
23 on Crime and Delinquency, the FEMA, and several
24 local, very loyal funders from our County of
25 Delaware.

1 In addition DAP maintains
2 relationships with over seventy-five private and
3 corporate foundations and is a United Way
4 agency.

5 Three of our most important core
6 services are offered to our clients on a
7 twenty-four/seven basis, three hundred and
8 sixty-five days of the year. They include the
9 operation of our twenty-four/seven crisis
10 hotline, our emergency shelter for victims and
11 their minor children rendered homeless due to
12 domestic violence, and our medical advocacy
13 services provided to victims seeking medical
14 attention in hospital emergency rooms at each of
15 the county's seven hospitals.

16 Other services, just to round out the
17 agency, include a full range of specialty
18 counseling programs for adults and children,
19 legal representation of clients seeking final
20 protection from abuse orders or needing
21 representation in custody matters, court
22 accompaniment and advocacy in the county's
23 thirty-six district courts, transitional
24 housing, a formal educational program in
25 elementary, secondary and university level

1 school settings, and as we mentioned before, our
2 little business, Nana's Attic.

3 Just to share a few numbers. In our
4 recently completed 2008 fiscal year, which ended
5 June 30th, DAP served four thousand six hundred
6 and twenty-two women, children and family
7 members, provided four thousand three hundred
8 and thirty-six nights of emergency shelter,
9 answered three thousand five hundred and
10 twenty-three calls to our hotline, represented
11 three hundred and eighty-two clients seeking
12 protection or custody orders, assisted two
13 hundred and eighty-three clients in criminal
14 court, trained a hundred and seventy-six chiefs
15 and members of law enforcement at eighty-two
16 roll call trainings at each of the county's
17 municipal police departments, and conducted
18 nearly two hundred educational training programs
19 at schools and for community groups.

20 In fiscal year '08, DAP received
21 private funding awards from a number of
22 philanthropic funding sources including the
23 Connelly Foundation, The Philadelphia
24 Foundation, Mellon Mid-Atlantic Charitable
25 Trusts, the Allstate, Boeing and Wawa

1 Foundations, as well as funding from about
2 forty-three other private and corporate
3 foundations.

4 This need to develop an
5 organizational capacity for private fund
6 development has been primarily driven by the
7 very deep and ongoing cuts in public funding. I
8 mention this because DAP is struggling now
9 financially and yet has also developed a very
10 mature private fund development program.
11 However, many other agencies have not.

12 To further understand the nature of
13 our funding, it's important to remember how
14 significantly and rapidly it has changed. In
15 fiscal year 2000, seventy-five percent of DAP's
16 revenue came from public governmental sources.
17 In fiscal year 2007, fifty-seven percent came
18 from public sources. This dramatic reduction in
19 public funding, particularly at the state level,
20 has forced us to scramble to try to offset those
21 losses with private dollars. And, we see no end
22 in sight to these ongoing reductions.

23 Our board of directors and I fully
24 anticipate a further reduction in public
25 support, as a percentage of total revenue, once

1 we conclude our current year's audit, thereby
2 necessitating an even more aggressive
3 development effort this year.

4 I am here today to urge your support
5 of House Bill 59 and to ask that you schedule it
6 for a vote as soon as possible. Rapidly
7 declining governmental support coupled with
8 skyrocketing increases in insurance, fees for
9 external auditors, utilities, food, and employee
10 health insurance are leveling deadly blows to a
11 host of human services programs in the
12 commonwealth.

13 Where our sector, domestic violence,
14 differs from other human service organizations
15 is on the issue of lethality. Research shows
16 us, as you all know, that domestic violence is a
17 pattern of behavior which escalates over time in
18 severity, frequency and the resultant injuries.
19 For many victims that we see, the provision of
20 domestic violence services can be more about
21 homicide prevention.

22 I am going to part just a second from
23 my prepared testimony just to share something
24 with you that the coalition and their staff
25 shared with me this morning on that issue of

1 lethality. It's an alarming statistic, but I
2 think sometimes they stay with us in ways that
3 can be very informative.

4 Between June 22nd, 2008 and July
5 22nd, 2008, seventeen Pennsylvania counties
6 experienced eighteen lethal domestic violence
7 incidents. The carnage left thirty-one people
8 dead, including a thirteen-year-old girl shot by
9 her father, a two-year-old girl and
10 eleven-month-old infant and a fourteen-month-old
11 girl.

12 The resources -- We are talking a lot
13 about fees versus costs, but the resources
14 needed to respond to these incidences and the
15 costs involved were absolutely staggering. Law
16 enforcement's response to the crime scenes
17 involved at least thirty municipal police
18 departments, seven state police barracks, two
19 special emergency response teams, volunteer fire
20 departments, ambulance services and local fire
21 departments. One of the incidents involved both
22 the FBI and U.S. Marshals.

23 I would like to share three critical
24 and quick examples with you on the subject of
25 lethality, in terms of the effect funding

1 reductions have had on just our program in
2 recent years.

3 First, just a little on our emergency
4 shelter. In DAP's 2002 fiscal year, we received
5 a hundred and ninety-seven thousand dollars from
6 the County of Delaware for our emergency shelter
7 from the Office of Housing and Community
8 Development, Human Services, and one of the
9 large townships.

10 This fiscal year, we are receiving a
11 hundred and fifty-eight thousand, a reduction of
12 nearly forty thousand, or twenty percent, all
13 due to reductions that the county received in
14 their fundings, not because they chose to use
15 money, you know, for other matters.

16 Annual operating costs at our
17 shelter, driven by utilities and transportation
18 and insurance, have increased dramatically over
19 the past five years. And, in addition to costs,
20 capacity continues to plague us. DAP turns away
21 an average of twenty-four victims of domestic
22 violence each month due to a lack of capacity at
23 our shelter.

24 As we mentioned previously, women
25 fleeing domestic violence and seeking emergency

1 shelter face their greatest risk of severe
2 bodily injury or death. Sufficient funding
3 could offset dramatic cuts received but also
4 afford us the ability to safely place women and
5 their children in alternate motels or in private
6 homes.

7 Over time, it could also provide the
8 resources needed to increase shelter capacity
9 among the other agencies like DAP in the
10 commonwealth. The lack of funding and the
11 paucity of emergency shelter beds in general
12 directly affects the safety of women and
13 children and really is a key predictor of
14 increased lethality and injury.

15 We all believe at the program and in
16 the coalition level that emergency shelters
17 really save lives, but they are in desperate
18 need of funding.

19 My second example is our work in the
20 county's district courts. In DAP's 2001 fiscal
21 year, we received fifty-five thousand dollars
22 from STOP. In this fiscal year, we are
23 receiving twenty-nine thousand eight hundred and
24 seventy, or a reduction of forty-six percent.

25 STOP stands for Services, Training,

1 Officers and Prosecutors. And these federal
2 funds, administered in Pennsylvania by the
3 Commission on Crime and Delinquency, support the
4 work of victim service agencies, local municipal
5 police departments, and district attorney
6 offices on behalf of services they provide for
7 victims.

8 Historically, DAP has used STOP
9 funding for two purposes: training in outreach
10 and education with law enforcement on domestic
11 violence procedures and protocols, and to also
12 provide court accompaniment and advocacy for
13 victims who must face their abusers--who are now
14 defendants--at preliminary hearings at any of
15 the district courts in the county following a
16 violation to an existing protection from abuse
17 order.

18 Again, a time of great risk for
19 victims, for now what was a civil protection
20 granted through a PFA has become a criminal
21 matter where bail can be ordered and
22 imprisonment is possible.

23 Due to restrictions and reductions in
24 STOP funding, DAP has reduced its staffing in
25 this area by fifty percent, with our full-time

1 criminal court advocate now reduced to part-time
2 status and struggling on a daily basis,
3 including night courts where many of the
4 districts operate to cover the most serious
5 cases at the county's courts. Fewer victims are
6 being served at a time of increased risk to them
7 and their family.

8 DAP has also had to regrettably
9 reduce the hours of our two part-time police
10 liaisons in terms of the amount of training that
11 they do with law enforcement.

12 Another risk caused by the lack of
13 funding in this area is that a very key
14 early-warning system, which is relied upon by
15 law enforcement and the District Attorney's
16 Office, has been set up for failure.

17 Let me just briefly explain. When
18 there is a violation of a PFA--which remember is
19 a civil matter--other criminal charges are
20 frequently made a part of the defendant's
21 hearing held in the criminal -- held in the
22 district courts. In serious cases, victims are
23 also encouraged to seek redress by filing a
24 separate indirect criminal complaint--sometimes
25 referred to just as an ICC--with the District

1 Attorney's Office.

2 Our D.A. Mike Green and law
3 enforcement rely upon these filings as an
4 early-warning system for potential future
5 lethality. The ICC filing tells them, this is a
6 defendant to watch. However, diminishing staff
7 present at prelims when these defendants are
8 arraigned dilutes the effectiveness of this
9 system and can ultimately serve to create more
10 dangerous conditions for law enforcement, the
11 courts, and victims.

12 Finally, my last example, which is
13 outreach and education. In recent years, DAP
14 has lost three full-time employees devoted
15 exclusively to early intervention, outreach and
16 education activities because of funding
17 reductions.

18 We conduct outreach and education
19 with a particular focus on the health care
20 system and the elementary and secondary schools
21 in our county. While we still maintain
22 customized curricula for these audiences, we
23 simply cannot reach the number of professionals,
24 children and teachers who are requesting our
25 services each year.

1 Our number of community
2 presentations, including those made to religious
3 and civic groups, has declined significantly, as
4 well as the number of trainings being done with
5 health care professionals. Less outreach and
6 education for us translates into less awareness,
7 increased risk, more injury and a potential for
8 greater rates of lethality.

9 In closing, due to the current
10 funding situation, this fiscal year DAP is
11 reducing the hours of several staff, not filling
12 a key vacant position, reducing its current
13 levels of commercial and professional liability
14 insurance coverages, may need to water-down its
15 employee health insurance program, and may need
16 to close a satellite office that we maintain in
17 the City of Chester after twenty-seven years of
18 operation.

19 And please bear in mind, DAP is an
20 agency who has generated a modest surplus from
21 operations for each of the past five fiscal
22 years. We have faired better than most, but now
23 we are very endangered.

24 On behalf of our board of directors
25 and staff and clients, I urge you to vote for

1 House Bill 59 with the -- perhaps the amendment
2 that the Chair has made in this committee, and
3 on the Floor, and to do all in your power to
4 make its enactment this Session or next a
5 reality.

6 The funding provided by this bill is
7 key to our efforts and ability to serve those in
8 need.

9 Thank you very much for your time and
10 attention. I would be happy to answer any
11 questions.

12 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: Thank you.
13 Questions?

14 (No response.)

15 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: I just wish we
16 would have dealt with this issue earlier in the
17 Session so that we could have addressed the
18 funding problem that you're having right now.

19 And I think you all do a good job.
20 It's a service for our counties and communities,
21 and we are going to have to do something to help
22 you out. I can see that these services are
23 desperately needed.

24 MS. CONNOLLY: Thank you, Mr.
25 Chairman, very much.

1 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: Thank you. We
2 will next hear from Margaret Ruddy, Executive
3 Director of the Women's Resource Center, Inc.,
4 and Jeane Decker, a guest speaker with the
5 Women's Resource Center.

6 MS. RUDDY: Good morning, Mr.
7 Chairman and committee members. My name is
8 Margaret Ruddy, and I am the Executive Director
9 of the Women's Resource Center. I want to thank
10 you for the opportunity to come here this
11 morning and testify about the need for House
12 Bill 59, any impact that it will have on
13 domestic violence victims in the commonwealth
14 and the programs that help them.

15 The Women's Resource Center opened in
16 1977 with a very small county grant and a large
17 group of committed volunteers. Right now the
18 center provides emergency shelter; legal
19 advocacy and representation, medical
20 accompaniment and advocacy to victims who are
21 using the health care system; we have a
22 twenty-four hour crisis intervention program; a
23 twenty-four hour program for counseling; we also
24 have a transitional housing program where women
25 can leave our shelter and live for up to

1 twenty-four months in subsidized apartments
2 where they can get their lives back in order.

3 The Women's Resource Center is the
4 founding mother of the Pennsylvania Coalition
5 Against Domestic Violence. And we have served
6 more than nineteen hundred victims of domestic
7 violence in just one year, last year.

8 With those services, we were able to
9 provide over ten thousand hours of crisis
10 intervention and counseling, as well as three
11 thousand nine hundred nights of shelter for
12 women who are in danger.

13 We serve two counties in northeastern
14 Pennsylvania: Lackawanna County, which spans
15 more than four hundred and fifty square miles
16 and has approximately two hundred and ten
17 thousand residents; we also serve Susquehanna
18 County, a smaller rural area, spanning about
19 eight hundred and thirty-four miles, with a
20 population of forty-three thousand and growing.

21 The Women's Resource Center is the
22 sole provider of domestic violence intervention
23 services to victims in those two northeastern
24 counties. And, like the majority of our
25 programs in Pennsylvania, we face many obstacles

1 due to the nature of serving such a large and
2 mostly rural area, and I will point some of
3 those obstacles out to you this morning.

4 First, the geographic distance the
5 victims must travel to access services really
6 requires us, as a program, to maintain the
7 satellite office. From our office in Scranton
8 to our office in Montrose, it's fifty miles one
9 way and so it really does make it necessary for
10 us to have a satellite program.

11 What's interesting about the
12 satellite program is, as it relates to Montrose,
13 is there is not a lot of office space in
14 Montrose, Pennsylvania, and so we pay as much
15 for rent in Montrose, Pennsylvania, for an
16 office as we do for our legal office in
17 Scranton. So the costs are fixed, even though
18 it is a small rural area.

19 Also due to the geographic distance
20 law enforcement must travel, it's very dangerous
21 for victims of domestic violence in that county.
22 It could take an hour for the state police to
23 respond to a domestic violence incident on any
24 given night.

25 And, in Montrose, the municipal

1 police only work during the day, they only have
2 enough resources to staff their department for
3 eight hours a day, and so the other sixteen
4 hours a day the Pennsylvania State Police has to
5 be available. So you can just see, at 2:00 in
6 the morning, how difficult it might be for a
7 woman to get safe when she is waiting an hour
8 for law enforcement.

9 Also, with travel distances, it takes
10 an hour to get from one part of Susquehanna
11 County to the other, and so if we are looking at
12 women who are looking for our services and have
13 no means of, you know, getting to our program,
14 then we are in the position of having to make
15 sure that, within our budget, we have vouchers
16 or gas money or transportation money available
17 to get women to the shelter or to court.

18 There is absolutely no public
19 transportation in Susquehanna County and in
20 other rural areas of Pennsylvania. If a family
21 only has one car and the batterer takes it to
22 work, then the -- oftentimes the victim is
23 stranded, with no way to get out.

24 And, lastly, rural battered women are
25 very physically isolated and sometimes it's our

1 hotline program that really keeps them in touch
2 with the outside world and in touch with that
3 life-saving information to be able to be free
4 and safe.

5 For us, the Women's Resource Center,
6 and many of our other programs in rural areas,
7 private foundations and charities are virtually
8 nonexistent, there are very few and far between,
9 which makes us even more dependent on government
10 funds. We have very few alternatives for
11 raising funds in Susquehanna County.

12 In recent years, we have seen our
13 government funding drop off dramatically. Since
14 2001, our government funding has been cut by
15 seventeen percent, and we are just one program
16 in the state.

17 We do all we can to raise money
18 through other means. We have an annual fund
19 drive, we do Santa's nippers Cut-A-Thon, as well
20 as an annual cooking show; but these sources of
21 money really only cover a small part of our
22 annual operating expenses.

23 What we used to be able to do with
24 those funds as well, we were able to, years ago,
25 to use those fundraising efforts to do creative

1 projects. Now we are using those fundraising
2 dollars to pay for staff and that's a real
3 dangerous way to run a business.

4 When cuts in government funding
5 happen, we have little choice but to cut staff.
6 We actually have lost five full-time staff in
7 the last few years and that has a direct impact
8 on services to victims.

9 What's particularly disturbing about
10 this trend is that this decrease in government
11 funding is coming at the same time that our
12 community's increase has gone up fifteen percent
13 each year in the past two years. Our ability to
14 provide life-saving services in -- for those
15 women and children in need is really eroding at
16 a rapid pace.

17 And these cuts not only hurt our
18 programs, but they also affect victims. The
19 nature of our work is two-fold: first, we
20 provide crisis intervention for victims who are
21 in emergency situations and need to protect
22 their safety; and second, we have a prevention
23 component which includes outreach, public
24 education, getting out into the community,
25 getting to know the community, doing law

1 enforcement trainings, training health care
2 providers, working with clergy and other faith
3 groups.

4 We really do that to try to raise
5 awareness so that we can ultimately stop the
6 cycle of violence as early as possible.

7 When our funding is cut, we are
8 forced to eliminate those prevention efforts
9 just so that we can keep the hotlines running.
10 But the cuts have been so dramatic and have
11 happened in such a short period of time that
12 it's not only just our prevention efforts that
13 have been affected, our services to victims are
14 eroding.

15 We have always operated on a
16 shoestring budget, cutting corners however we
17 could. There are no more corners to cut. We
18 have been forced to, as I mentioned, lay off
19 staff, eliminate life-saving projects, and
20 really stretch ourselves dangerously thin.

21 Just for an example, our office in
22 Susquehanna County has a hotline that serves
23 that entire community. We now only have the
24 funds to cover that hotline in that community
25 eight hours a day; the other sixteen hours a day

1 the phone gets transferred from Montrose to
2 Scranton which is fifty miles away.

3 We hear from victims frequently that
4 when they try to get through on our phones, the
5 line is busy. Just last week as I was
6 preparing, actually, for this testimony this
7 morning, I received a call from a colleague and
8 social worker who said that she had a woman that
9 she was with who had just been battered and the
10 batterer had beat her up in front of their two
11 children.

12 She asked me, as would be the norm,
13 if we could transport the woman to get a
14 protection order. Every one of our advocates,
15 every office was filled, there was not one
16 advocate available that morning to provide
17 safety and transportation and accompaniment to
18 court for that woman. That badly-injured woman
19 had to navigate the civil justice system alone.

20 To add insult to her injury, when she
21 got back to the center after going through
22 court, she was looking for shelter. And as with
23 many days in Lackawanna County and Susquehanna
24 County, our shelter was full. We literally had
25 to put this working mom on a bus, with her two

1 kids, and she had to travel sixty miles away to
2 find a place to stay for her and her children.

3 We are in desperate need of more
4 resources. We cannot afford to lose the trust
5 of the community, nor can we stand by and watch
6 crime victims be denied services simply because
7 there is not enough money to respond to their
8 basic needs.

9 I have worked at the Women's Resource
10 Center for twenty-four years. I have witnessed
11 and been a part of tremendous changes that we
12 have initiated to end violence against women. I
13 have shared in the creation of projects and
14 programming to respond to victims and to the
15 community needs around domestic violence. And
16 we were making a significant difference.

17 I am now in the disheartened position
18 of having to eliminate some programs we have
19 worked so hard to build. Prior to 2002, the
20 Women's Resource Center was seen as a vibrant
21 change agent in Lackawanna and Susquehanna
22 counties. As I mentioned earlier, we were out
23 there in the community doing outreach, building
24 relationships and educating individuals about
25 domestic violence.

1 Our presence provided opportunities
2 for families and friends, members of victims'
3 families who might not otherwise call the
4 hotline or reach out. When you are out in the
5 community and you are able to meet with people,
6 we hear all kinds of stories and we are given
7 opportunities to reach out to victims in
8 indirect ways.

9 Our absence in the community right
10 now creates an environment where dialogue and
11 community problem-solving are nonexistent and we
12 see the myths of misconceptions about domestic
13 violence flourishing.

14 We want to restore the progress we
15 worked so hard to gain. We need to get back to
16 reaching those people in the community who were
17 once not only trained to identify domestic
18 violence but also were able to make referrals to
19 our programs.

20 We really want to restore our
21 capacity to serve every victim who comes to us;
22 we don't want to have to bus them some place
23 else, we don't want to have them hear that the
24 hotline is busy, we don't want them to have to
25 walk through the courthouse and face the legal

1 system with no one there to help.

2 House Bill 59 will enable our program
3 to restore these fundamental services. With the
4 additional funding this bill will provide, not
5 only will we be able to rejoin the community
6 fight against domestic violence, but we will be
7 able to move forward and repair the erosion to
8 our crisis intervention programs.

9 But we desperately need your help to
10 make that happen. We need House Bill 59 enacted
11 as soon as possible.

12 I realize that decisions about
13 funding are difficult ones, surcharges and
14 filing fees may seem very disconnected from the
15 work of saving victims, but I want to emphasize
16 that the work of domestic violence programs is
17 absolutely about not only saving lives but
18 changing lives and ending the epidemic of
19 domestic violence.

20 Since we opened our doors in 1977,
21 the Women's Resource Center has intervened in
22 the lives of over twenty-eight thousand
23 individuals from Pennsylvania, from northeastern
24 Pennsylvania.

25 While that number demonstrates the

1 volume of services we provide, it only hints at
2 how prevalent domestic violence is. And it does
3 not reflect the faces and the individual stories
4 of victims of domestic violence.

5 Each of those victims served
6 represents the story of a person who is in
7 crisis and came to us for help: the woman who
8 is driven to a shelter at 3:00 in the morning;
9 the victim who has been abused for seventeen
10 years and finally decides that it's time to
11 leave, after she watches her seventeen-year-old
12 teenage son act just like his father.

13 These human stories are tragic.
14 What's really important for me to note this
15 morning, however, is that the work of our
16 programs, domestic violence work, is much more
17 about courage and strength, not just about
18 tragedy. These stories of these women and
19 children remind us of the importance of our work
20 to save lives and to change lives.

21 On that note, this morning I have the
22 privilege to introduce to you one of those very
23 courageous women that I know from Lackawanna
24 County, Jeane Decker, who will share her story
25 with you this morning.

1 MS. DECKER: Good morning. As Peg
2 said, my name is Jeane Decker. I am the mother
3 of two children, four adult stepchildren, and
4 grandmother to three children, and those are the
5 more obvious identities that I possess.

6 Some lesser known identities I also
7 have are that I am a graduate student at
8 Marywood University and an intern at the Women's
9 Resource Center, as well as the Barbara J. Hart
10 Justice Center, which is a law project at the
11 Women's Resource Center.

12 But lastly, and most importantly, I
13 am before you this morning to speak as a
14 survivor of domestic violence, who has benefited
15 and been a recipient of many of the services
16 that the speakers are talking about this
17 morning.

18 Five years ago, I thought I had
19 escaped domestic violence by leaving a ten-year,
20 physically and emotionally abusive marriage. My
21 children and I moved into our own home shortly
22 after my divorce. I had a job that I loved in a
23 prominent psychiatric practice as a billing
24 manager, and it appeared that we could live in a
25 violence-free home.

1 That appearance of a violence-free
2 home lasted only a few months until my
3 ex-husband broke into my home, in the middle of
4 the night, and beat me with a crow bar, in front
5 of our then four-year-old son who had been
6 sleeping next to me. From that moment on, our
7 lives were forever changed. It would never be
8 the same.

9 Eventually my ex-husband was caught
10 and served two-and-a-half years in the state
11 prison. You might think that that should be the
12 end of my story. However, that's truly where
13 life, as I know it now, began.

14 Due to the hearings and the pleadings
15 regarding the crime, I had to miss work on
16 several occasions and take time. Over the
17 course of two months, each time I returned from
18 the court hearing, the atmosphere in the office
19 grew more intense until ultimately I was forced
20 to resign my position.

21 I then found myself with a mortgage
22 to pay, children to provide for, and no income
23 to support us all. It was also during that time
24 that the District Attorney's Office provided me
25 with a phone number to contact the Women's

1 Resource Center and I did.

2 Prior to this contact with WRC, I had
3 not known this service was available in my
4 community. But now I had a need. And the call
5 that changed my life was made at the 2 in the
6 morning, to the hotline of the Women's Resource
7 Center, and someone answered.

8 I was provided with support that I
9 had not ever known before. And the support of
10 an advocate on the hotline is priceless. I
11 can't even begin to tell you what that phone
12 call meant to me that first time I made it.

13 Aside from the hotline, my children
14 and I also participated in a domestic violence
15 support group and children's group. I also
16 received services through the Barbara J. Hart
17 Justice Center and was represented as I battled
18 for custody of my children while my ex-husband
19 was in prison.

20 Due to losing my job, I had
21 difficulty keeping myself going financially and
22 was in jeopardy of losing the home that I had
23 purchased. This loss would have occurred
24 through foreclosure. Yet again another problem,
25 brought on by the domestic violence I fought so

1 hard to survive.

2 But again, there was another program
3 through the Women's Resource Center that was
4 able to fulfill my need, and that was one of
5 transitional housing. My children and I lived
6 in the transitional housing unit for nearly two
7 years while I was learning to reclaim my life
8 and start over.

9 During my stay in transitional
10 housing, I was able to make decisions clearly.
11 And with much support and encouragement from the
12 advocates and the programs at the Women's
13 Resource Center, I made the decision to go to
14 college. I graduated on Mother's Day of this
15 year with a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work.
16 And as you heard me mention when I began to
17 speak, I am now a graduate student due to
18 graduate in May of 2009 with a Master's Degree.

19 Now, I don't want you to think I am
20 so unique as a survivor. As I mentioned, I
21 attended support groups. And there were, at
22 many times, up to twenty women in the group, on
23 any given night, who either had left an abusive
24 marriage or were in the process of moving. And
25 this definitely shows the need for victim

1 services such as the ones I received.

2 The services that are life-changing
3 to a victim are varied from one to another.
4 However, in each service, each service provided
5 is an investment made in the future of the
6 survivor and her children. There are many women
7 who have helped to pave the way for me to have
8 access to the services that changed my life.

9 And I aspire to be a survivor who
10 helps to pave the way for other survivors to
11 come so that victims' services will continue to
12 be available as long as victims are in need.

13 I am happy to tell you that I have
14 come full circle, being a victim to a survivor
15 and now an intern and advocate. I feel
16 privileged to be interning at the Women's
17 Resource Center and the justice center.

18 Now working on this side of things as
19 an intern, I not only have my experience as a
20 survivor but I am getting to see what services
21 are most important to other survivors.

22 Every person experiencing domestic
23 violence needs to know there is hope,
24 encouragement and services available to help her
25 reclaim her life, not simply because she is in a

1 most vulnerable position but because she is a
2 valued member of the community and worth
3 investing in, and these are the services that
4 helped me to reclaim my life. Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: Thank you for
6 your testimony. Are there any questions from
7 the panel? No. Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: Well, next,
9 Donna Glover, Executive Director of the Violence
10 Services of Lancaster County.

11 MS. GLOVER: Good morning. My name
12 is Donna Glover. However, everybody calls me
13 Bonnie Glover, so. I just want to say thank
14 you. It's always an honor and a privilege to be
15 able to come before you to talk about the needs
16 of battered women.

17 And I will just give you a few brief
18 things about myself. I have been involved in
19 working with victims of domestic violence for
20 the past thirty-two years. Something that I
21 thought initially was just going to be two years
22 has become a passion and a way of life, and it's
23 about a commitment of making our society better.

24 And in Lancaster County -- And I do
25 have to acknowledge Katie, who has been a true

1 supporter of our services. And, in fact, she
2 had served as our honorary Chair on our 30th
3 anniversary. So we know we have dedicated
4 people, both locally and on a statewide level,
5 that are willing to make a commitment to helping
6 victims of domestic violence.

7 My job here this morning is only to
8 talk a little bit about Lancaster in particular
9 because the people who came before me have so
10 eloquently talked about the services and what
11 goes on individually. But I, in the end, want
12 to focus on about our statewide network and how
13 important that really is.

14 Lancaster itself is a large
15 community, and we have a mixture of both urban
16 and rural areas. We have over forty-one
17 townships that provide -- that actually come
18 together to provide the services that we have to
19 give for victims of domestic violence.

20 Additionally, we are part of a large
21 organization, which is the Community Action
22 Program of Lancaster County. And by doing that,
23 we are able to save money, in terms of our
24 administrative overhead, and we pull resources
25 together, and that is very important. However,

1 we, too, have been severally affected by cuts
2 over the last four years.

3 Prior to four years ago, I could
4 stand and be proud to say the services that we
5 provided were full, comprehensive,
6 life-changing, life -- for victims of domestic
7 violence.

8 The last four years have been a major
9 struggle. We have lost over twenty percent of
10 our staff. We went from a staff of thirty-two
11 full time and five part time down to twenty-two
12 full time and four part time. That had to do
13 with hours. That used to be a
14 thirty-seven-and-a-half-hour workweek, down to a
15 thirty-hour workweek, for some members, to
16 twenty hours for our part-timers.

17 We have also had to reduce our legal
18 clinic. We had a comprehensive legal clinic
19 that had two full-time attorneys, a paralegal,
20 and four legal advocates. And now we have one
21 full-time attorney and one part-time attorney,
22 one legal advocate, no paralegal. That
23 translates into women who are seeking services,
24 from our protection from abuse orders, where we
25 work very closely with MidPenn.

1 We are very mindful of resources, and
2 we try to make sure that there is no duplication
3 of services. And because of that, we are on the
4 end of taking care of the crisis, temporary PFA
5 for women, and then we then turn over victims to
6 MidPenn who then gets final orders.

7 We do the orders that are complicated
8 or complex with our attorneys. The attorney
9 that we have then spends her time doing custody
10 and support. Because we know that economic
11 justice is what really is going to make a
12 difference for many women to be able to become
13 self-sufficient.

14 Additionally, we do operate a
15 twenty-four hour hotline, the emergency shelter.
16 We can shelter up to thirty-five women and
17 children at any given time. We have our
18 transitional housing program. We do counseling.
19 We do work with children. Volunteers are very
20 important in our work that we do.

21 And, unfortunately, all of those
22 services have suffered a decrease.

23 We are able to still shelter a large
24 number of women and provide a large number of
25 days--as you will see in your chart that was

1 provided--under the statewide network.

2 The difficulty now is the resources,
3 or lack thereof, that are available not only for
4 victims of domestic violence but victims in
5 general. So when we were able to move women out
6 of shelters sooner, we no longer can do that.

7 Although shelter is about a
8 thirty-day emergency program, we shelter women
9 up to ninety days in many instances because
10 there is virtually no other resources available
11 for her. And we feel it's unfair that a woman
12 would have to be forced to return to an abuser
13 or become homeless because we lack the resources
14 to do that.

15 So I think it's very important that
16 you -- And I know you have a commitment. And
17 hopefully you will be able to make that
18 commitment a reality, in terms of supporting
19 House Bill 59, to make sure that it is passed.

20 Additionally, what's important for
21 us, is that we have a strong funding base.
22 Initially, when we started back in 1976, we had
23 a budget of fifty thousand dollars. Then we
24 grew our budget to one point seven million
25 dollars.

1 From nineteen -- Excuse me. From
2 2002 until the present, our budget now is back
3 to one point four million. So just over the
4 last four years, we have lost over three hundred
5 thousand dollars. That's approximately eighteen
6 percent of the funding. We also have decreased
7 our staff, like I said, by 20 percent.

8 And what's even more significant is
9 that we then have raised a lot of money locally.
10 Our split is basically sixty-percent
11 governmental and forty-percent local/private
12 fundraising. And that takes a lot of effort.
13 And, unfortunately, even now, with shrinking
14 resources, that's going to become endangered.

15 So it's very important that as a
16 commonwealth, we make a commitment to what we
17 call is a statewide network of services.

18 Earlier, Congress -- or
19 Representative Grell talked about a fair share.
20 What is really a fair share?

21 We, as the coalition and as advocates
22 of domestic violence, we feel that it's
23 important, it is like crucial that any victim of
24 domestic violence be able to have access to
25 services regardless of where she is. She

1 shouldn't have to be living in an area that is
2 heavily populated in order to get the money.

3 And one of the beauties, I think over
4 the last thirty years or twenty-eight years of
5 funding, through this system and this allocation
6 process, had to do with having a commitment that
7 battered women in the Commonwealth of
8 Pennsylvania, be it in Potter County,
9 Philadelphia, Allegheny or Lancaster, that they
10 would have access to services within a
11 fifty-mile radius.

12 Fortunately, we have been able to
13 achieve that. There are sixty-one programs in
14 the commonwealth, and they serve all sixty-seven
15 counties.

16 Unfortunately, things are getting
17 worse.

18 And by supporting this particular
19 bill, it also goes along with the philosophy
20 that we have adopted in terms of how we provide
21 our services, and that has to do with JARS.

22 And JARS is about justice, it's about
23 accountability and autonomy, it's about
24 restoration, and it's also about safety. So
25 from a justice point of view, you, as members of

1 the General Assembly, have an obligation and
2 also I know you have a personal commitment to
3 see that every victim of domestic violence has
4 free and accessible access to services.

5 Additionally, in terms of being
6 autonomous, a woman has to know, or any victim
7 has to know, that this commonwealth is committed
8 to services for victims of domestic violence and
9 to helping her, and even men, to become what
10 they want to be.

11 Restoration, it's two-fold. One is
12 the psychological damage that's done when you
13 are a victim of domestic violence. That takes a
14 life-time to get over.

15 The other part is the economics and
16 being able to have services available that you
17 can do just what Miss Jeane talked about what
18 she was able to do. Many, most victims want to
19 live their lives free of violence, but there is
20 so many challenges that they are facing that it
21 is oftentimes hopeless. And if we are not able
22 to provide that hope, where is our society going
23 to be?

24 I was fortunate, the last weekend, to
25 have our 50th family reunion. And our 50th

1 family reunion, our theme was about past,
2 present and the future. And right now, in our
3 commonwealth, we have to look at what are we
4 going to be able to do for victims of domestic
5 violence and how are we making a commitment.

6 We know what has happened in the
7 past. We know the present state of mind right
8 now. Resources have dwindled. We cannot rely
9 on our federal government any longer. We have
10 to talk about stability and consistency in
11 funding. And I think through this particular
12 legislation, we have the perfect opportunity to
13 make another commitment.

14 We made one back in 1990. And now we
15 are just asking that that fee be increased. And
16 that all of us work together to make sure we may
17 have safety. Because without safety, none of
18 this will be possible.

19 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: Thank you,
20 Bonnie. Questions?

21 REPRESENTATIVE TRUE: You just do
22 good all the time.

23 MS. GLOVER: Thank you. I know you
24 can read the testimony, but I figured I would
25 spare you that.

1 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: You did very
2 good, excellent. I put you in a good memory
3 here. All of this -- (inaudible) and you are
4 very brief.

5 REPRESENTATIVE KILLION: I would just
6 like to thank the Chairman for holding the
7 hearing. And I greatly appreciate his comments.
8 And also thank the members of the committee.
9 But more importantly thank everyone that came,
10 took the time to testify today, not just for
11 your testimony but the great work you are doing
12 day-in and day-out back into your own areas.
13 Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: I just want to
15 ditto those remarks. And we'll get to this.
16 Trust me, we will. And I think your cause is
17 just, and we need to address that.

18 And I think the economy is just, you
19 know, a part of what we are all facing. And I
20 don't know how, after hearing all of the
21 testimony, how you have been able to keep the
22 ship afloat with the leakage that you have
23 financially and all that you do.

24 But, hopefully, we are going to get a
25 life preserver that can give you some help.

1 Just bear with us and let's see if we can't
2 resolve some of these problems for you.

3 I want to thank you. And we will
4 adjourn the hearing. Thank you.

5 (At or about 11:20 a.m., the hearing
6 was adjourned.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Roxy C. Cressler, Reporter, Notary Public, duly commissioned and qualified in and for the County of York, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and accurate transcript of my stenotype notes taken by me and subsequently reduced to computer printout under my supervision, and that this copy is a correct record of the same.

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Dated this 22nd day of August, 2008.

Roxy C. Cressler - Reporter
Notary Public

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