



Domestic Violence Services of Fayette County, Inc.  
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The Honorable Thomas R. Caltagirone, Chair  
House Judiciary Committee  
106 Irvis Office Building  
PO Box 202127  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2127  
August 5, 2008

Re: House Bill 59

Dear Chairman Caltagirone:

As the Director of Domestic Violence Services of Fayette County, Inc. I am writing to ask that you submit this letter as testimony favoring House Bill 59. At a time when funding is shrinking and inflation is growing the importance of HB 59 cannot be understated. My program is suffering all the same difficulties of rising heating and food costs that each one of us is experiencing.

HB 59 Bill provides for dedicated funding for vitally needed services to victims of domestic violence. In the past fiscal year our program alone has provided shelter and free legal services to over 900 battered women and children who were at risk for serious injury at the hands of batterers. We provide school education to let children know that violence is wrong and there are choices for families living with violence. And we provide much, much more at no cost to victims.

Funding streams are drying up. The costs of employing a staff and running a shelter are escalating. Victims are crying out to us to help them find safe lives free from fear.

Fundraising efforts have become increasingly creative. We even have Board Members who, under cover of darkness, will plant a flock of the ugliest plastic flamingoes on someone's lawn when a donor requests to have a friend "flocked". Needless to say we will eventually run out of both "flockers" and "flockees".

I ask most urgently for the support of HB 59. One of our Board members visited the shelter yesterday and reminded us that her desire to serve this program stemmed from having been here as a younger woman when she was a victim of domestic violence. She later had to deal with the heartache of having her own mother killed brutally in a domestic violence homicide.

We have to keep our programs functioning to break this cycle of violence that persists in dysfunctional families and in our community as a whole.

Sincerely yours,

Jacquelyn M. Albert, LCSW  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR