



Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Testimony Regarding

HB 6439, AAC the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2023, and Making Appropriations Therefor

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

Department of Housing Budget

Appropriations Committee February 19, 2021

Good afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Hartley, Representative Gibson 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 members 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.

CCADV is a member of the statewide Reaching Home Campaign to prevent and end homelessness in Connecticut. We, alongside many other partners in the state, know that safe, affordable, and permanent housing is the only solution to homelessness. When our state's residents have stable housing, their economic and health outcomes improve.

Domestic violence is the leading cause of homelessness among women and children. Access to safe, stable, affordable housing is one of the biggest challenges facing survivors. Connecticut's domestic violence shelter system has run over capacity for the past several years. This means that at any given point in the year, on average, our shelters are full. Shelters are a lifeline, but they are not a permanent housing solution and should only be considered the first step, when necessary, to help survivors and their children achieve safety and stability.

COVID-19 has further highlighted the housing challenges facing survivors. Similar to many during this pandemic, some survivors have lost their jobs, some have had their work hours reduced either by their employer or due to childcare/homeschooling issues, and all have faced an unprecedented landscape of hiring freezes and economic collapse. Many are deeply fearful of what will happen to their families when eviction moratoriums are lifted. CCADV's HUD-funded Domestic Violence Rapid Rehousing Program has been a lifeline for many, with 87 families housed between March and December 31st. However, more supports to meet the housing needs of survivors are necessary.

With respect to the Department of Housing (DOH) budget, we request that the Governor's proposed \$3 million reduction due to spending lapses be repurposed for the Rental Assistance Program and/or homeless services. We respectfully request additional funding investments in DOH including an addition of:

- \$2.3 million in specific funding for Coordinated Access Networks (CANs) to a new line item called 'Homeless Supports';
- \$2 million in the Housing/Homeless Services Line to provide rental assistance to 200 scattered-site supportive housing units;
- \$100 million for additional COVID-19 rental relief; and,
- \$20 million for the Rental Assistance Program (RAP)

Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

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