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CONTACT: Tony Gibart with End Abuse, tonyg@endabusewi.org, 608.255.039 x310

Joint Finance Committee Approves Investments in Safety of Domestic Violence Victims

Madison - Domestic violence survivors and their advocates applaud the Joint Finance Committee for approving investments in the safety and wellbeing of domestic violence victims and their children. On Thursday, the committee agreed with Governor Walker's recommendation of additional funding to support domestic violence shelters and services and added funding to address the civil legal needs of domestic and sexual violence victims.

"We are very grateful the Joint Finance Committee took these very significant actions on Thursday to support victims and their children," said Patti Seger, executive director of End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin. "The approved funding will help ensure victims get the assistance they deserve."

Advocates also believe the resources will have life-saving impacts across Wisconsin.

"Currently, about 250 requests for help each day in Wisconsin cannot be met. But when a domestic violence victim does have access to the assistance of an advocate, the likelihood the victim will escape the violence increases by about 150%," said Seger. "We know that connecting victims with the services that would be available with this funding will save lives."

In February, the Governor recommended providing additional funding to support domestic violence shelters and services in response to a finding that these services are underfunded by about \$19.7 million annually in Wisconsin.

In addition to okaying the Governor's proposal, the committee set aside additional funds to be used specifically for the civil legal needs of victims.

"One of the most troubling ways we fail domestic violence victims and their children is by letting them walk into civil court without attorneys who can assert their rights and protect them from abusers," said Seger. "The civil legal aid established by the committee will make a world of difference for the adult victims and children who will no longer have to face abusers alone."

"We thank the Governor and the many legislators who worked to secure this critical funding," concluded Seger.

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More information about domestic violence in Wisconsin, victim services and the unmet need can be found at: www.widvplan.com.

End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin: The Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence is the leading voice for victims of domestic abuse in Wisconsin. At End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin, we educate shelter and program volunteers and advocates, law enforcement, legislators, and community members to provide safety and support to survivors. We strive to shift Wisconsin from the attitudes and beliefs that cause domestic violence to values of mutual respect and equality, and we partner with communities in the effort to prevent and end domestic abuse.

We encourage reporters to include the National Domestic Violence Hotline number [1-800-799-SAFE(7233)] in their stories for victims who need help. A list of local Wisconsin domestic violence victim service providers can be found at <http://www.wcadv.org/gethelp>.