

Submitter: William Hurt
On Behalf Of: Survivor Services POP 327 and HB 3196
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

Co-Chairs Lieber and Sanchez, Co-Vice Chairs Girod, Gomberg, and Smith, and Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means,

When I was a child I lived with domestic violence in my home. When I went to sleep I could hear the arguing, hear the thud against the shared bedroom wall of my small home as my father shoved my mother. I contemplated occasionally whether I would wake up in the morning, or if this was the night my father lost control and decided to end us. My mother and my sister and I had the advantage of family near by that could take us in after my father thankfully decided simply to leave.

I write today on behalf of so many women and their children that don't have any resources to make their escape. They are trapped. What is the role of a government if it isn't to help provide resources and funding to ensure the protection of the most vulnerable among us? As an adult now I live every day with those experiences in my past. I can't go door to door to help the children like I was, the women like my mother was. The best I can do is ask you to please maintain the funding that is already in place for victims of domestic violence and please at the very least do not reduce it.

I urge you to pass two pieces of legislation.

The first is the Department of Justice Budget POP# 327 that will provide ongoing funding to stabilize critical survivor services programs (\$22M). This will maintain the same funding levels as in past years to ensure survivors of interpersonal violence can access the support they need and deserve, including crisis intervention, emergency shelter, safety planning, and advocacy.

The second is HB 3196, which will backfill VOCA funding (\$18.5M). Federal legislators are actively working on a sustainable fix for VOCA (H.R. 909), which has bipartisan support and, at last count, 148 co-sponsors. This one-time investment will ensure that when crime victims turn to agencies and systems providers for support, help will be there.