

The New York City Coalition of Non-Residential Domestic Violence Service Providers

*c/o Domestic Violence Project * Urban Justice Center
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PRESS RELEASE

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AS PATERSON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SCANDAL GROWS, GOVERNOR ALSO ZEROES OUT FUNDING TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES IN NEW YORK

Governor's FY11 budget would eliminate \$3M in critical dedicated domestic violence services funding; funding cuts will actually cost the State more money

Recent reports confirmed Governor Paterson's direct involvement with and influence over a victim of domestic violence marring the reputation of the Governor, once lauded champion of domestic violence victims' rights. This scandal follows the conviction of former Senator Hiram Monserrate for physically assaulting his female companion.

Agencies that serve victims of domestic violence, already outraged by this egregious behavior, are also reeling from the impact of Governor Paterson's proposed cuts to dedicated domestic violence services in New York State. In his proposed 2010-2011 budget, released in January, the Governor eliminated \$3M of dedicated domestic violence services funding - \$1.25M of which is used in New York City to provide critical services to domestic violence victims.

"These services are lifelines to thousands of victims of domestic violence in New York City," says Madeline Garcia Bigelow, Co-Chair of the New York City Non-Residential Domestic Violence Service Providers Coalition, a group of NYC domestic violence organizations who receive this critical funding, "They help victims through their crisis, provide essential supports, and prevent injury and even death."

With this funding, New York City providers deliver social services, such as counseling, advocacy and accompaniment, to more than 3,200 victims each month. They also provide legal services to more than 1,000 victims monthly, and annually answer over 65,000 hotline calls.

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Member Agencies

*Barrier Free Living - Help ROADS - Jewish Board of Family & Children's Services - New York Asian Women's Center -
NYANA Center for Women & Families - New York City Anti-Violence Project - Queens Legal Services - Sanctuary for
Families - Seamen's Society - STEPS to End Family Violence - Urban Justice Center Domestic Violence Project - Violence
Intervention Program - Safe Horizon*

Cutting this funding will decimate programs, many providing services specific to particularly underserved, hard-to-reach communities, including disabled victims, immigrant groups including Haitian, Latina/o, Asian, Bengali, Japanese, Gujarati, and Korean victims, Arabic speaking victims, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and HIV-affected victims, and trafficked women.

Cutting these modest funds would ultimately result in higher State costs in other areas, including increased emergency room visits, public assistance, and shelter costs.

“Shelter alone averages \$27,000 a year per family,” said Lucia Riviuccio, the Coalition’s other Co-Chair, “Preventing shelter placement of just 46 families in New York City will save the \$1.25 million annual cost of these programs. Recent events illustrate the need for Governor Paterson and the Legislature to ensure the safety of victims of domestic violence by restoring these funds.”

“As the past few days have shown, New York State domestic violence victims face very real obstacles in trying to obtain protection and safety, and they often fail without an expert advocate,” continued Madeline Garcia Bigelow, “This funding allows advocates throughout the state to work with victims to obtain the protections that the state law provides, but are often unattainable without a dedicated domestic violence victim advocate. Without this funding, New York State will leave victims of violence even more vulnerable than they are now.”

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