

MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

STATE FUNDING FOR PRIMARY PREVENTION PROGRAMS THAT AIM TO STOP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE BEFORE IT OCCURS

(Legislation Pending)

The New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NYSCADV) urges the New York State Legislature to **allocate significant funding for primary prevention programs** that address the root causes and conditions that make domestic violence possible.

We have reached a turning point in the work to end domestic violence. We have come a long way in responding to the problem after it has occurred. Now, we must focus on **stopping domestic violence before it starts**.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), domestic violence is preventable. Emerging public health strategies call for collaboration across sectors to address social, environmental and structural determinants of health – because improving how we live, learn, work and play can prevent domestic violence as well as enhance our overall health and wellness.

Primary prevention includes building community, establishing gender equality, passing legislation, cultivating healthy relationships and changing the culture. It's about educating individuals on what they can do every day to help create a world free of domestic violence. For primary prevention to be effective, it must be done by **ordinary people collectively making changes in their daily lives**.

Primary prevention strategies include:

- Working with children and adults to set expectations for healthy communication;
- Working with schools, caregivers, workplaces, and other community settings to change behaviors;
- Saturating communities with healthy relationship messaging and promoting safe and responsible bystander behaviors; and,
- Promoting policies and cultivating leaders who set expectations for healthy relationships and communities.

Through its decades of work on the prevention of domestic violence, NYSCADV has concluded that meaningful, lasting change occurs at the community level, and that this work must represent the broad geographic and cultural diversity of New York State. NYSCADV's efforts focus on supporting communities to create effective and locally-relevant primary prevention programs. But local domestic violence programs – already financially strapped – do not have sufficient budgets to fund primary prevention programs. Significant state funding, support and resources must be allocated so we can collectively create a future free from violence.

(continued)

Legislative changes have the widest-reaching and longest lasting impacts on our communities. When we pass laws to encourage healthy behaviors, discourage unhealthy behaviors, and improve the quality of life for all people, social norms begin to change.

NYSCADV urges the New York State Legislature to:

- Fund domestic violence primary prevention programs and initiatives in coordination with NYSCADV and local domestic violence programs;
- Require healthy relationship behavior programming in all New York State schools and policies for responding appropriately when unhealthy relationship behaviors occur; and,
- Establish a \$17.25 million¹ dedicated funding stream – equal to the cost of responding to a single homicide – to create and support NYSCADV and local domestic violence service providers so they can implement groundbreaking primary prevention initiatives across New York State.

ABOUT NYSCADV:

Established in 1978, NYSCADV is designated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as the information clearinghouse, primary point of contact, and resource center on domestic violence for the State of New York. NYSCADV is responsible for supporting the development of policies, protocol, and procedures to enhance domestic violence intervention and prevention and also provides education and technical assistance to the network of primary-purpose domestic violence service providers statewide.

For more information, contact: Joan Gerhardt, Director of Public Policy and Advocacy, 518.482.5465

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¹ Delisi, Kosloski, Sween, et. al. 2010. Murder by Numbers: Monetary Costs Imposed by a Sample of Homicide Offenders. The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology. 21(4). P 501-503