

MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

Strengthen Protections for Domestic Violence Victims When Cancelling Shared Phone and TV Contracts

A.6780 Rosenthal L.

The New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NYSCADV) urges the New York State Legislature to pass this legislation which would provide critical protections for domestic violence victims seeking to cancel shared telephone and cable contracts.

Currently in New York State, domestic violence victims can cancel bundled or multi-family telephone and cable contracts, removing a major barrier victims face when breaking free from an abuser. Last year, a new law (Chapter 578) simplified the process for DV victims to obtain this accommodation by allowing them to provide a self-attestation in writing of their eligibility as a victim to obtain the accommodation.

A.6780 strengthens protections for DV victims in cases where an abuser submits a self-attestation claiming they are the victim in order to obtain this accommodation for themselves, leaving a DV victim with the financial responsibility for the telephone or cable contracts.

Specifically, the bill would:

- Authorize one or more individuals who are under a shared contract to opt-out of such contract without a fee, penalty or charge, regardless of how many other people on the shared contract made similar requests;
- Prohibit telephone and cable companies from transferring any contractual or billing responsibility of such shared contract to any other account holders on such shared contract; and,
- Prevent companies from prohibiting a person who has opted-out due to their status as a DV victim from entering into a new contract with such company.

In order to ensure DV victims are protected from abusers seeking to saddle them with the financial responsibility on shared phone and TV contracts, it is critical for the Legislature to approve A.6780 this legislative session, so these protections are in place before last year's law becomes effective.

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.

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