

# Daughters of Penelope Civic Responsibility Campaign

## *Action Alert*

### October Is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month

#### Background

Domestic violence is a pervasive, life-threatening crime affecting millions of individuals across our nation regardless of age, gender, socio-economic status, race or religion. The statistics<sup>1</sup> are alarming:

- Nationwide, an average of three women are murdered by a current or former intimate partner every day.
- One in four women and one in seven men have been the victim of severe physical violence by an intimate partner.
- Approximately 15.5 million children are exposed to domestic violence annually.
- 51.5% of victims who identified a need for housing services did not receive them.
- The cost of intimate partner violence exceeds \$6.5 billion each year.
- Domestic violence has been estimated to cost employers in the U.S. up to \$13 billion a year.

Though steady progress has been made there are many victims who still suffer in silence. In fact, a 2013 24-hour survey of domestic violence programs across the U.S. found that although 66,581 adults and children victims were helped and found refuge on the day survey, 9,641 requests for services went unmet because programs lacked the resources to provide the services. As the economy remains uncertain, the unconscionable gap between need and resources only widens.

- [Presidential Proclamation: National Domestic Violence Awareness Month 2014](#)

<sup>1</sup> Statistics by National Network to End Domestic Violence, "Domestic and Sexual Violence Fact Sheet."

#### What You Can Do To Make a Difference

In addition to supporting your local domestic violence center, or creating awareness about how a victim can find help, you can do your part to strengthen the voice of champions on Capitol Hill who seek an end to domestic violence or you can help support federal programs that work to aid victims of domestic violence.

Two ways you can assist are:

1. Help to grow the Congressional Victims' Rights Caucus – Ask your U.S. representative to join today.
  - The **Victims' Rights Caucus (VRC)** is a bipartisan caucus that advocates for crime victims, including domestic violence, and law enforcement officials.
2. Support Violence against Women Prevention and Prosecution programs and Crime Victims programs at the Department of Justice.

## Take Action

### Grow the Victims' Rights Caucus

[Click here to learn how](#) to contact your U.S. representative and ask him/her to join the Victims' Rights Caucus. (Sample email/letter content is also found there.)

- [Click here to see if your U.S. representative is a VRC member](#)

### Support Federal Victims' Programs

Congress reached a budget agreement to temporarily fund the federal government through to December 11, 2014 at current Fiscal Year 2014 levels. As a result, Congress will have to resolve Fiscal Year 2015 appropriations funding upon its return to session on November 12.

- Therefore, Congress must be made aware of the importance of victims' services programs when it debates and works on Fiscal Year 2015 appropriations funding before year's end.

## Action

Urge your members of Congress (U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives) to support lifesaving victim services programs for domestic, sexual violence, and crime victims. Send a simple, concise message via phone, letter, or email will work:

***“Ensure that lifesaving services will continue to be available to victims of crime and domestic and sexual violence. When Congress returns to session to address Fiscal Year 2015 funding, I encourage strong support for programs like those administered at Office on Violence Against Women and the Office for Victims of Crime at the Department of Justice—and those administered under the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act, such as The National Domestic Violence Hotline – that provide social, law enforcement, housing, and support services, among others, for victims.”***

## How Do I Contact My Member of Congress?

### VIA Internet/E-mail/Letter/FAX

- Visit <http://www.house.gov/writerep/> to obtain the contact information for your U.S. Representative.
- To contact your U.S. senators, please visit [http://www.senate.gov/general/contact\\_information/senators\\_cfm.cfm](http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm)

### VIA Telephone

- In addition to writing your legislators, you can also call him/her through the Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121.

## Helpful Tips

- ✓ Identify yourself as a constituent.
- ✓ **Ask to speak with the Judiciary Legislative Assistant** (if contacting by phone).
- ✓ Keep your message as brief and as focused as possible.
- ✓ For expediency, we recommend sending a fax or telephoning as opposed to correspondence that is mailed. However, mailing a letter is suitable.

- ✓ Remember, members of Congress work for you and they want to hear from you.
- ✓ **Note:** For the purposes of record keeping, please send a copy of your correspondence to: Executive Director Elena Saviolakis at [Elena@ahepa.org](mailto:Elena@ahepa.org).
  - This will allow us to know who in Congress has been contacted for future follow-up.

## Questions?

- ✓ Please contact Daughters of Penelope Legislative Consultant Andrew Kaffes, [Andrew@agkaffes.com](mailto:Andrew@agkaffes.com).

## Resources

### Domestic Violence Information



National Domestic Violence Hotline  
1-800-799-SAFE (7233)  
1-800-787-3224 (TTY)

- ✓ [Additional Hotlines](#)

### Office of Violence Against Women – Grant Programs

- ✓ <http://www.justice.gov/ovw/grant-programs>

### Office for Victims of Crime – Crime Victims Fund

- ✓ <http://www.ovc.gov/about/victimsfund.html>