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The Honorable Dean Heller  
U.S. Senator  
324 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Heller:

On behalf of the Daughters of Penelope (DOP), a preeminent international organization for women of Hellenic heritage and Philhellenes that sponsors and supports domestic violence shelters throughout the United States, I write to commend your sponsorship of **S.2784, to reauthorize the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act**. We are pleased to see strong bipartisan support for the bill. The Daughters of Penelope supports the legislation.

As you are aware, the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) is a lifeline for survivors of domestic violence. It supports lifesaving services including: emergency shelters, legal assistance, crisis hotlines, counseling, and programs for underserved communities throughout the United States, American Indian and Alaska Native communities, and territories. FVPSA is the only federal funding source dedicated to domestic violence shelters and programs, supporting almost 1,600 community-based programs through state formula grants.

For the Daughters of Penelope, there is strong interest in the legislation's enactment because of the vital assistance FVPSA provides to Penelope House Domestic Violence Center, Mobile, Alabama, which DOP members helped to found. Penelope House was the first domestic violence shelter established in the state of Alabama in 1979, and it has been recognized by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) as a leading, model shelter for others to emulate.

- FVPSA funds the salaries of two on staff for Penelope House's Prevention Education Program and program supplies (videos, literature, items with the crisis number, etc.) that are viewed by 20,000 children each year in the public, private, and Catholic schools in the four counties Penelope House provides services.
- A FVPSA grant also partially funds staff that provides domestic violence training and educational outreach efforts.

Our organization also is proud to sponsor and support a second domestic violence shelter, Penelope's Place, in Brockton, Massachusetts. Moreover, many of our 250-plus chapters support their local domestic violence centers. All benefit in some way from FVPSA.

Therefore, we applaud you for taking the lead to stand with survivors of domestic violence with the important need to reauthorize the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act. We look forward to working with you and your staff to raise awareness of the legislation during what remains of the 115th Congress.

Sincerely,

Demi Thomas  
Grand President