



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Domestic Violence in the State of Connecticut has been and continues to be an epidemic. There have been several horrific tragedies in the last week alone – domestic related murders, police standoffs, arrests AND release of several career domestic violence defendants, not to mention the recent derogatory comments by the defense team in the Marriott rape case.

And all the while the OVA has been preparing a lengthy investigative report in response to yet another senseless domestic murder in 2007 which will be released in the beginning of September 2009. The report identifies gaps in services to domestic violence victims.

There is a solution.

Violations of Protective Orders and Restraining Orders are the ONLY charge where there is an underlying, prerequisite, identified element of violence. We in the criminal justice field know for a fact these charges involve a threat to the protected party. As such, when the Court, State's Attorney, and law enforcement are faced with violations of these orders, there needs to be a swift, immediate response, which includes an immobilization of the perpetrator. Experience has shown the perpetrator will test the responsiveness to violations of the order, and when there is none, will continue to escalate. We can no longer demand victims of domestic violence to continually beg the government to respond to violations – there needs to be a zero tolerance to domestic violence. The remedies include IMMEDIATE ARREST OF OFFENDERS, HIGH BOND, HOUSE ARREST WITH GPS monitoring, and/or INCARCERATION to those who have violated Orders or who have a history of violence and are before the Court on a new domestic related charge.

It has been twenty-six years since the tragedies of Torrington Connecticut and the assault on Tracey Thurman's life after which we promised we would change the landscape of domestic violence protection – we have not. The changes in laws are clear, but not the attitudes and ramifications of violations of these laws. We cannot simply allow victims to die, live in fear, and go without protection.

Additionally, for victims who are considering leaving, we who populate the Courts, State's Attorney's Offices, law enforcement departments, and victim service agencies, need to continually advise these victims to work with domestic violence professionals regarding safety planning and steps to take to keep safe. Victims of domestic violence need to know that they are not alone and we are all resources for them.