



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF VICTIM ADVOCATE
505 HUDSON STREET, HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106

Michelle S. Cruz, Esq.
State Victim Advocate

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CONTACT:
State Victim Advocate
Michelle Cruz, Esq.
(860) 550-6632

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Hartford) STATE VICTIM ADVOCATE MICHELLE CRUZ APPLAUDS THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR PASSAGE OF HOUSE BILL 6629, AN ACT CONCERNING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.

"There are some groundbreaking provisions in this bill that will further protect victims of domestic violence and have a direct impact on the safety of victims and their children," stated Michelle Cruz. "In short, this bill will save lives."

The Office of the Victim Advocate (OVA) has worked closely with the Speaker's Task Force on Domestic Violence for the last two years. "In the last two years, this task force has undertaken and accomplished more for victims of domestic violence since the sweeping changes made as a result of the horrific assault on Connecticut resident Tracey Thurman," added Cruz.

One critical component of the bill that the OVA has strongly advocated for specifies that the named protected person listed on an order of protection CANNOT be criminally liable for a violation of the order of protection. "Many times, domestic violence offenders will manipulate victims to maintain contact even when a protective order has been ordered and prevents the contact," explained Cruz. "However, the response should never be to arrest the victim."

Additionally, the bill establishes a task force to evaluate the existing policies and procedures used by law enforcement agencies when responding to incidents of domestic violence and to develop a state-wide model policy for use by law enforcement. This was a key recommendation in the OVA's Investigative Report, *The Murder of Tiana Notice*. "The OVA's investigation into the facts and circumstances surrounding the murder of Tiana Notice clearly demonstrate the strong need for a state-wide model policy for law enforcement and a coordinated community response to incidents of domestic violence," emphasized Cruz. "I'm thrilled that the legislature agreed and passed this very important legislation."

Contact the Office of the Victim Advocate at (860) 550-6632 to obtain a copy of the investigative report or the report can be found on the OVA's website: www.ova.state.ct.us

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