

Message from the Chair

July 19, 2007

Re: Funding for Domestic Violence Programs

Dear Colleague:

During the past two weeks, some questions have arisen regarding the funding levels in the Domestic Violence appropriation under the Department of Public Welfare (DPW). For many years now, DPW has provided a grant to the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV), which in turn, subgrants with 62 local programs providing services to persons physically abused in their homes and in need of emergency and ongoing social services – such as counseling and temporary shelter.

In 2006/07, the budget provided \$11.772 million in the Domestic Violence appropriation. In the Governor's February 2007 budget proposal, the appropriation increased by \$1.553 million to a level of \$13.325 million. This increase included \$353,000 for a three percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) and \$1.2 million for "for grants to domestic violence shelters." In March, the Department informed the Appropriations Committee that \$400,000 of the increase plus the entire COLA would be granted to PCADV, but \$800,000 of the increase would be granted to Philadelphia shelters, which the Department evaluated as having a significant increased need.

During the spring, DPW and PCADV had discussions regarding the entire increase being granted to the statewide organization. The General Assembly was not part of these discussions; however PCADV informed many of our members that DPW had conceded to provide the entire increase to their organization.

As part of the budget talks in June and July, the Administration reiterated their original initiative, with discussions around removing \$800,000 of the increase from the Domestic Violence appropriation and placing the funds in a separate appropriation to be given to shelters in Philadelphia. As you are aware, this proposal was unpopular with most of the General Assembly membership. As a result, the Administration withdrew support for the targeted funding for Philadelphia shelters in the Domestic Violence appropriation and removed this funding as part of finalizing the overall budget expenditure level.

The Conference Committee report (House Bill 1286) adopted by the General Assembly funds the Domestic Violence appropriation at \$12.525 million. This appropriation includes an additional \$753,000 over 2006/07 (\$400,000 general increase plus \$353,000 for a three percent COLA). House Bill 1286 does not include a separate appropriation of \$800,000 to be targeted to Philadelphia shelters.

As part of the discussions between DPW and PCADV, the Department also has questioned the methodology used by the Coalition to determine subgrant amounts. My office will continue to monitor these discussions, as it is important that every state dollar be monitored and accounted for in this appropriation and every line item in our General Fund budget.

I hope that you find this information useful. Please contact my office with any further questions or concerns.



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