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State and federal funding cuts puts domestic violence victims at risk

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Last week New Hope For Women, and all of the domestic violence programs and organizations in Maine received the news: drastic cuts in funding, or the elimination of funding, has been proposed by both Governor Baldacci and by President Bush for fiscal year 2009.

Our Maine Department of Health and Human Services administrator has verified that Governor Baldacci's supplemental fiscal year 2009 budget completely eliminates state funding for domestic violence programs.

President Bush's 2009 budget drastically cuts or eliminates our major federal funding sources. The four main sources of federal funding are: the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), Family Violence Prevention Services Act (FVPSA), Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and Social Services Block Grant (SSBG).

The following is a summary of what New Hope for Women received last year, what was expected in 2008 and the 2009 status.

The State's funding of \$197,382 will be eliminated. Federal funding for VOCA - \$85,459 - in 2009 this will be eliminated; FVPSA \$64,417 - major cuts expected for 2009; SSBG - \$173,759 - in jeopardy for 2009; VAWA - \$15,390 - major cuts in 2009. Total state and federal funding \$526,407. The cuts represent 60 percent of New Hope's total budget. State cuts are expected to go into effect on July 1, 2008.

These cuts put 15 full-time positions at New Hope and seven part-time educator positions at Time For Change at stake.

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State and federal funding cuts puts domestic violence victims at

Services to dating and domestic violence victims will not survive in any recognizable form if all these cuts occur.

Take Action!

The process is underway to get a balanced state budget passed. We need to do everything we can to ensure funding for victims of dating and domestic violence is fully restored before the budget is passed. Legislators pay attention to us when they hear from us, and they need to hear from a lot of us.

A list of contact numbers and e-mail addresses are included below.

What Legislators Need to Know

Our legislators need to know: thousands of abused women, children and men will have no place to turn if New Hope and the other eight domestic violence programs in Maine are forced to close. The proposed \$1,092,744 cut to dating and domestic violence victims' services in the Governor's 2009 supplemental budget must be fully restored.

The state has faced huge budget deficits in the past, and never before has any Maine department, legislature or governor concluded that eliminating services for victims of domestic violence and their children was an option for balancing the budget.

Provisions of Acts and Programs

FVPSA/Battered Women's Shelters funding - provides lifesaving emergency services for victims and families who are fleeing abuse. We are asking support of this funding at \$175 million in the 2009 Congressional budget.

The VOCA Fund, a key non-taxpayer funded source of support for services that help victims cope with the trauma and aftermath of violent crime in the Commerce, Justice, and Science budget is critical priority. In the wake of the devastating cuts to VOCA in the 2008 budget, it is essential that Congress protect VOCA-funded services. Unfortunately, President Bush's 2009 budget again proposes eliminating the balance of the VOCA Fund. We urge you to protect the balance in the VOCA Fund and raise the VOCA Fund cap to \$717 million in 2009.

VAWA programs in the Labor, Health and Human Services (LHHS) and the Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) budgets are at the core of our response to victims. The President's 2009 budget proposes a crippling \$120 million cut in the CJS budget.

We urge you to support full funding for VAWA programs at \$320,000 million in the LHHS budget and \$683 million in the CJS budget for 2009. Without full funding for VAWA programs,

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www.InsuranceDesk.com

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House Cleaning - references available. Call Judy 633-1105. 2-14-4t*

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women and children throughout Maine will not be able to access the services they need to escape from violence as counties across the state may lose these services entirely

Public Hearing in Augusta

Speak your mind. Show your support. On March 11 and/or 12, a public hearing is expected to take place. At press time, date(s) and a timeframe could not be confirmed.

Contact the Dept. of Health and Human Services for confirmation.

Sign the Online Petition

www.maineandobetter.org/index.php to sign an online petition and obtain the latest information.

Legislative Contact numbers and e-mail information

Senator Susan Collins

622-8414

<http://Collins.senate.gov/public>

Senator Olympia Snowe

622-8292

<http://snowe.senate.gov/public>

Representative Tom Allen

774-5019

<http://tomallen.house.gov>

Representative Michael Michaud

942-6935

<http://Michaud.house.gov>

Representative Bruce MacDonald

RepBruce.Macdonald

@legislature.maine.gov

Representative Peter Rines

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Manchester, From People



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Max, Age 7
Lyseth Elementary