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Women's Group Rallies Against Proposed Cuts

Web Editor: Rhonda Erskine, Online Content Producer

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LEWISTON (NEWS CENTER) -- Monday, members of the Abused Women's Advocacy Project, AWAP for short, staged a protest rally in Lewiston to decry possible budget cuts to state domestic violence programs.

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Some of the deepest state budget cuts could come in domestic violence programs, which are already struggling.

Along with state budget cuts, AWAP also faces cuts in federal funding, specifically for such programs as the Victims of Crime Act and the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act.

To make matters worse, proposed changes in Medicaid funding could also hurt programs for abused women and children.

"We handle 10,000 domestic calls a year. We provide services to over 8,000 people. This form of cut for us is just detrimental to the overall well-being and safety of women," said AWAP Executive Director Kate Williams Palmer.

"If women and children do not have a place to go, the question is, how will we respond to that? What will happen when women and children show up at the local police station, saying 'I can't go back there, it's not safe?'," said Jill Brown from AWAP Shelter Services.

The advocates say Governor Baldacci should consider a moderate tax increase or a raise in the lodging tax to keep domestic violence programs from going under.

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