

Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence
2011 General Assembly - Legislative Report
February 22, 2011

- **FY 11 Budget – Shelter Funding:** The House has passed the FY 2011 Amended budget. It eliminates all state funds for domestic violence and sexual assault services (\$4.48M) and replaces such funds with Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funding. **The Senate Appropriations Committee has recommended restoring \$2.5M in state funding.** Under the Senate's proposal, domestic violence programs would receive \$1.845M and sexual assault programs would receive \$655,000 in state funding. The Senate's recommendation restores nearly half of the current state funds to domestic violence programs and 100% of the sexual assault state funding. Once the full Senate votes on this proposal on Feb. 24, House and Senate budget leaders will negotiate to resolve the differences between their versions of the budget. **Advocates need to contact the legislators listed below and urge them to adopt the Senate position in the FY 11 Amended budget and restore \$2.5M in state funding to domestic violence and sexual assault programs. Please thank the Senators for their leadership in restoring these critical funds!**

Sen. Jack Hill – (404) 656-5038
Sen. Chip Rogers – (404) 463-1378
Sen. Tommie Williams – (404) 656-0089
Representative Terry England – (404) 463-2245
Representative Jan Jones – (404) 656-5072
Representative Larry O'Neal – (404) 656-5052

- **FY 12 Budget – Shelter Funding:** Rep. Penny Houston's Appropriations subcommittee is now working on the FY 12 budget. Next year's budget contains the same recommendation as the FY 11 Amended budget: to eliminate all state funding for domestic violence and sexual assault and replace those funds with TANF. At a recent budget hearing, DHS Commissioner Clyde Reese reported that DHS has contacted federal TANF officials to determine if TANF funds may be used in the same way that programs currently use state dollars. He hopes to receive feedback from the federal officials before the FY 12 budget is completed. However, even if the federal officials indicate that TANF funds can be used for all shelter services and expenses, GCADV continues to have concerns about the total elimination of all state support for these life-saving services. We understand that additional restrictions on the use of TANF funds are likely in the near future given that Congress is currently reauthorizing the TANF

program. Additionally, cuts to Georgia's TANF grant appear likely given the pressure in Congress to reduce spending. If domestic violence programs are primarily funded by TANF, any future changes to TANF funding could have a dramatic effect on the ability to continue the provision of these services. **Advocates need to contact members of Rep. Houston's subcommittee (listed below) to ask them to keep all state funding for domestic violence programs in the budget in FY 12.**

Representatives:

Penny Houston (Chair): 404-463-2247
Keith Heard: 404-656-0220
Michele Henson: 404-656-7859
Judy Manning: 404-656-7868
Greg Morris: 404-657-8441
Quincy Murphy: 404-656-0265
Mary Margaret Oliver: 404-656-0265
Ed Setzler: 404-656-0177

- **Immigration bills:** GCADV has worked with Rep. Matt Ramsey, the sponsor of HB 87, to address some concerns regarding the impact of the immigration reform bill on victims of domestic violence. Rep. Ramsey has agreed to add language to clarify that the new offense of harboring or transporting a person without legal status could not be charged unless another criminal act was also being committed. Thus, so long as program staff are abiding by all other laws, programs should not be at risk of violating these new harboring and transporting offenses. Additionally, Rep. Ramsey added language to emphasize that if a person has contact with law enforcement to report a crime, seek assistance as a crime victim, or serve as a witness to a crime, law enforcement may not check their immigration status. Although GCADV continues to have concerns about the unintended consequences of this legislation, we hope that these changes in HB 87 will provide guidance to law enforcement on the application of these new provisions.
- **Human trafficking:** Rep. Lindsey introduced HB 200 to strengthen penalties against forced sexual and labor servitude and provide additional resources to victims. The bill is being heard in the House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee.

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