

The Mercury (Pottstown, PA)

December 6, 2004

Montco Commissioners Adopt Domestic Abuse Policy

By Margaret Gibbons, Special to The Mercury

NORRISTOWN – The Montgomery County commissioners have adopted a policy addressing employees’ needs when they are victims or perpetrators of domestic violence.

The seven-page policy is designed to heighten awareness of domestic violence and to provide guidance for employees and management when addressing domestic violence occurrences.

“Your policy is even more comprehensive than our own,” said Maria Macaluso, the executive director of The Women’s Center.

Macaluso was one of the representatives of victim advocacy organizations that county solicitor Barry M. Miller worked with in developing the policy.

The policy recommends employees advise their supervisors if they are victims of domestic violence, and directs management to work with these employees in addressing the problem.

Management should be sensitive to an employee’s needs, such as needing time off for counseling, medical treatment or pursuing legal avenues, and should try to be flexible in scheduling an employee’s work day, according to the policy.

Safety plans, including security escorts to parked cars, will be provided to those who fear that the violence might spill over into the workplace, the policy states.

Any physical assault or threat made by a county employee while on county property during working hours, or at a Montgomery County-sponsored event, will be considered a serious violation of the policy. Employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination, the policy states.

“I am very pleased with this policy and hope all Montgomery County employers will follow our lead in developing a domestic violence workplace policy,” said Commissioner Ruth S. Damsker.

Damsker called for the creation of the policy shortly after a protection from abuse petition was filed against Commissioner Thomas J. Ellis by his former fiancée.

Copyright © 1995-2004 PowerOne Media, Inc.