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National Network to End Domestic Violence Commends President Obama for Focus on Jobs, Healthcare

Washington, D.C. – The National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) today praised President Obama for outlining priorities in his State of the Union address that will better serve survivors of domestic violence.

“President Obama’s focus on jobs and healthcare is music to our ears,” said Sue Else, NNEDV’s president. “Access to affordable healthcare and financial independence can be lifelines for victims of domestic violence.”

One of the greatest barriers to escaping abusive relationships is economics. Many abusive partners control money and finances to trap victims in relationships. During an economic downturn, fewer job opportunities are available for survivors to become financially independent and free from abuse.

“While a bad economy does not cause domestic violence, it can make it worse,” Else said.

Programs that provide services for victims are experiencing greater demand while funding for services is down. Governmental entities, corporations and individuals feeling the financial strain are contributing to domestic violence service providers at lower levels.

“Creating jobs, ensuring access to healthcare, closing the gender gap in wages, expanding education opportunities, nearly doubling the child care tax credit – all of these goals would greatly help survivors of domestic abuse,” Else said. “We look forward to continuing our work with the administration and Congress on these priorities and to fully fund the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act, which is the lifeblood of domestic violence shelters and programs.”

In 2008, women comprised 46.5 percent of the workforce; but women earned only 80 percent of men’s median weekly earnings according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that the costs of intimate partner violence exceed \$5.8 billion each year, \$4.1 billion of which is for direct medical and mental health care services.

“The president’s address underscores his deep commitment to improving the quality of life for everyday people. We applaud President Obama for setting priorities that would help so many people live happier, safer lives,” Else said.

Approximately 2.3 million people in the United States are victims of domestic violence each year. One in four women will experience domestic violence at some point in her life, and an average of three women are killed every day at the hands of a current or former intimate partner.

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NNEDV, a 501(c)(3) organization, is a leading national voice for domestic violence victims and their allies. Its members include the 56 state and territorial coalitions against domestic violence. It works closely with them to understand the needs of domestic violence victims and advocacy programs. NNEDV has been a premiere national organization advancing the movement against domestic violence for the past 15 years, after leading efforts among domestic violence advocates and survivors in urging Congress to pass the landmark Violence Against Women Act of 1994. To learn more about NNEDV, please visit www.nnedv.org.