

National Network to End Domestic Violence
National Resource Center on Domestic Violence
West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence

TALKING POINTS

On October 7, 2009, A Kanawha County (West Virginia) circuit judge made a ruling that was rife with error. The decision against the Family Protection Services Board wrongfully said the board's rules discriminate by denying abused men access to publicly funded shelters and female abusers access to treatment programs.

- The judge's ruling in *Men & Women Against Discrimination v. the Family Protection Services Board* was in error. We expect it to be appealed and rightfully overturned.
- The licensing standard certification set by the Family Protection Services Board is designed to train staff to better help victims of domestic violence and their children. It does not discriminate, and it helps to save lives.
- Violence among intimate partners is wrong regardless of who commits it.
- We want to make services available to all victims and treatment available to all offenders.
- The West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence is dedicated to helping all victims and stopping domestic violence whenever it occurs.
- It is indisputable that women are at grave risk when domestic violence escalates.
 - A report last month from the Bureau of Justice Statistics found that, in 2007, 1,636 females and 702 males were murdered by intimate partners in this country.
 - In 2001, the Bureau of Justice Statistics found that women account for 85 percent of all victims of domestic violence.
- When resources are scarce, as is now the case, we have to focus on helping those who are in greatest danger.
- We also have to recognize that in residential situations, all sorts of services programs – not just domestic violence shelters – have to provide separate living quarters to unrelated men and women. That is why domestic violence shelters focus on serving mostly women and their children. But they also provide life-saving resources to male victims.

- The vast majority of women and men understand who is at the greatest risk of domestic violence, and they support life-saving domestic violence programs.
- We would all be better off if the people who brought this lawsuit stopped harassing domestic violence programs and instead joined us in working to prevent violence. Our country would be much better off if they did.

[If asked: The California ruling is being mischaracterized. While the court there ruled that services should be available for victims of both genders, it did not require programs to provide the same services. For instance, they can shelter female victims and give hotel vouchers to male victims. That is a reasonable accommodation given the fact that most victims who need services are women.]