NYSCADV
NEW YORK STATE COALITION
AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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2021 Public Policy Platform

The following is a list of NYSCADV's priority areas for the 2021 legislative session:

1. **Funding:** New York State is in the process of transforming its system of funding and oversight of domestic violence programs. The system has not been updated since it was established more than 30 years ago. NYSCADV supports creation of the strongest statewide network of domestic violence services in the country by implementing a new funding structure for domestic violence programs. The first step toward achieving this goal — implementation of a $5 million pilot project to assess a new flexible funding model — was not able to advance in 2020 due to the fiscal uncertainty presented during the COVID-19 Pandemic. NYSCADV will continue to advocate for the implementation of this pilot project in 2021.

   In addition to changing the way in which New York State funds domestic violence programs, NYSCADV continues to urge New York to dedicate additional funding to support domestic violence survivors and their families. New York State has one of the highest demands for domestic violence services in the country — higher than many states with larger populations — yet funding for domestic violence programs has remained flat for decades. Significant additional funding is needed for counseling, safety planning, children's services, legal advocacy, job training and skills development, and most important, to provide a wider range of housing options beyond or instead of emergency shelter.

2. **Housing**: The intersection of domestic violence, homelessness and housing insecurity is undeniable. Survivors often report a lack of safe and affordable housing as one of the primary barriers they face when they chose to leave an abusive partner. Emergency shelters can satisfy immediate, short-term housing needs. However, many communities in New York lack an adequate number of affordable housing and transitional housing, which provide short-term housing with wrap-around support services such as assistance obtaining public benefits, finding employment, and counseling. Further, many landlords refuse to lease properties to domestic violence survivors, despite New York State laws against such discrimination. NYSCADV is committed to working with New York State to enhance housing options available for survivors of domestic violence, such as the Domestic Violence Housing First Approach which focuses on getting survivors of domestic violence into stable housing quickly and then providing the necessary supports needed for them to rebuild their lives. In addition, NYSCADV will work to increase avenues for survivors' economic stability (e.g., job protections, benefits, fair pay, child care, tax credits, etc.), to advance strong protections against discrimination in housing, and passage of the Home Stability Support program which would provide rent supplements for those eligible for public assistance benefits and facing eviction, homelessness or loss of housing due to domestic violence or hazardous living conditions.

3. **New York's Criminal and Family Court Systems:** Judges play a crucial role in their courtroom and in their communities to help end violence against individuals. It is therefore critical for judges and court personnel to understand the dynamics of domestic violence, the needs of domestic violence survivors, and the harm courts may cause victims when domestic violence or child abuse is minimized. NYSCADV is collaborating with legislative leaders to require comprehensive domestic violence training for all judges and court personnel

before they can hear such cases, as well as participation in regular, robust continuing education programming.

With respect to child custody and visitation, NYSCADV seeks to advance public policies that protect victims and their families by keeping children away from violent offenders, strengthening requirements for professionally supervised visitation, and establishing standards for Child Custody Evaluators. NYSCADV opposes any legislation that prioritizes economic factors over the health and safety of a child.

4. **Ensuring Equity for All Domestic Violence Survivors:** NYSCADV is committed to partnering with the thousands of organizations across the country who are working to change the systems of oppression that enable all forms of violence to occur. We know that race, sex, gender identity, religion, nationality, immigration status, sexual orientation, class and/or disability-based oppressions do not act independently of one another. We know that racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, adultism and ableism are interconnected and these oppressions permeate our institutions, our schools and universities, our healthcare facilities, our courts and criminal justice system, our government and our workplaces. NYSCADV is prioritizing its efforts to pursue anti-violence and anti-oppression work from an intersectional lens. We are committed to elevating the experiences and voices of survivors and those living at the margins. We will conduct education about the impact of various oppressions across society. And we will examine and seek to improve systems' practices, policies and protocols to ensure compliance with this mission.

Established in 1978, the New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NYSCADV) is designated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as the information clearinghouse, primary point of contact, and resource center on domestic violence for the State of New York. NYSCADV works to create and support the social change necessary to prevent and confront all forms of domestic violence. NYSCADV's policy agenda employs both legislative and systems change advocacy to support the needs of domestic violence survivors and their families and the programs that support them.

Revised: January 6, 2021