



Testimony of Mary Lee Kiernan, President & CEO of YWCA Greenwich,
on behalf of the Board of Directors of YWCA Greenwich
Before the Connecticut General Assembly
Joint Committee on Judiciary
April 19, 2019

In support of:

S.B.689 – AN ACT CONCERNING THE ISSUANCE OF EX PARTE RESTRAINING ORDERS.

Senators Bergstein, Kissel, and Winfield and Representatives Blumenthal, Rebimbas, and Stafstrom, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee.

Thank you for your consideration of S.B 689, which seeks to add language to the state’s domestic violence restraining order statute (CGS 46b-15) that provides judges with the authority to consider imminent physical danger when granting an ex parte restraining order.

YWCA Greenwich is one of 18 organizations that make up the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Domestic violence is the second most reported crime in Greenwich, and it is the number one violent crime in Greenwich.

YWCA Greenwich provides its services free of charge to victims participating in our programs. Services include a 24/7 hotline, crisis intervention, group and individual counseling, emergency shelter, civil and criminal court advocacy, and financial counseling. Education, professional training, community awareness and prevention programs are also critical components of the programs delivered by YWCA Domestic Abuse Services.

Statistically, one in three women and one in four men will experience some form of physical violence by an intimate partner,* and the presence of a gun in a domestic violence situation makes it five times more likely that a woman will be killed.** In addition, even when an abuser does not pull the trigger, the threat of violence is often used to exert power and control over their victim.***

*National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey

**Campbell, J. C., Webster, D., Koziol-McLain, J. et al. (2003). Risk factors for femicide in abusive relationships: Results from a multisite case control study. American journal of public health.

***Sorenson, S. B., & Schut, R. A. (2016). Nonfatal Gun Use in Intimate Partner Violence A Systematic Review of the Literature. Trauma, Violence, & Abuse

Currently the state's ex parte restraining order statute is limited to circumstances in which the victim faces "immediate and present physical danger." Hearings are held within 14 days of an application for a restraining order when no ex parte order is granted or in cases when an ex parte order is granted and the respondent does not hold a firearm permit or certificate. Hearings are held within 7 days of ex parte orders granted where the respondent does have a firearm permit or certificate. The ex parte or temporary order protects the victim between the date of the application and the hearing.

By giving judges the ability to consider imminent danger that may be present prior to the restraining order hearing, they can consider issuing the temporary order when, for instance, the respondent is jailed but will be released prior to the hearing.

We believe this small change will be beneficial for some victims, and we respectfully urge the Judiciary Committee to support S.B. 689 out of Committee and support its passage by the full General Assembly.

Thank you for your consideration.

*National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey

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