

For Immediate Release
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Misdemeanor Prosecution Standoff Must End

Topeka, KS, October 11, 2011 – The Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence and the National Network to End Domestic Violence are shocked that the City of Topeka and Shawnee County, Kansas, have decided that the safety of their citizens who are victims of domestic violence is not a priority.

All over the state and the nation, communities have made the safety of victims of domestic violence a priority; in spite of the economic downturn. In Kansas, two communities have recently maintained criminal justice/domestic violence related positions after losing grant funds. In one of them, the Chief of Police has continued a grant-funded investigator position, maintaining domestic violence investigation as a priority. In the other, the city has retained a police investigator position and a victim witness coordinator for the municipal court, while the local domestic violence program has continued to maintain the police response advocate position in spite of loss of funds. In another Kansas community, an expanded center serving adult and child victims of domestic and sexual violence opened this week.

In Cincinnati, Ohio, the city governing body just passed a resolution this week declaring that living free from domestic violence is a basic human right.

This is what prioritizing domestic violence prosecution and safety of victims looks like; not repealing city ordinances, not refusing to prosecute because of budget cuts, not tossing the safety of victims back and forth between city and county governments and prosecutors; not reducing or omitting funding for critical services and responses. This isn't about budgets it's about priorities.

The National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) stands together with the Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence (KCSDV) in calling for an end to this standoff between two local governments, in calling for an end to domestic violence without consequences. We demand that victims be protected and that batterers be held accountable.

For decades, KCSDV and NNEDV have urged state and local governments to prioritize the issue of domestic violence. We are saddened and shocked that during Domestic Violence Awareness Month these local governments have reversed time and turned their backs on victims.

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Founded in 1982, the purpose of KCSDV is the prevention and elimination of sexual and domestic violence through a statewide network of programs providing support and safety for all victims of sexual and domestic violence and stalking, with primary focus on women and their children; direct services; public awareness and education; advocacy for victims; comprehensive prevention; and, social change efforts. Learn more at www.kcsdv.org.

NNEDV, a 501(c)(3) organization, is a leading 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.