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**New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault Testimony before the Senate Budget
Committee on the
Fiscal Year 2011 New Jersey State Budget**

On behalf of the New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault
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Dear Chairman Sarlo:

Several months ago, a confidential sexual violence advocate working at one of the 22 sexual violence programs in New Jersey answered the hotline and spoke to a suicidal man. The caller was a middle-aged educator who as a child had been sexually assaulted by an acquaintance of his family. He had never told anyone about the assault and certainly had not reported it to the police. Many years later, he was still haunted by the assault. Over the years, he had been hospitalized for depression and had previously attempted suicide. He was calling the sexual assault program hotline as a last ditch call for help, which fortunately was there for him. The advocate on the line spent a great deal of time with him, assessed his safety, helped him with referrals and, most importantly, believed him. With the support of the sexual violence program, he was able to get into therapy and start to deal with the trauma of his childhood assault.

Another recent caller to a sexual violence program hotline was worried about a client of hers. The caller, a social worker, was concerned that her client, a young woman with a developmental disability, was being abused by her foster father. An advocate met the client and the social worker at the local emergency room, where the client was being examined for signs of sexual assault. The advocate helped the social worker understand the dynamics around sexual violence for someone with a developmental disability and supported the young woman, who eventually disclosed that her foster father was sexually abusing her. She was removed from the foster home and action was taken against the foster father.

Also in the past year, a confidential sexual violence advocate was called to the hospital to respond to a teenager who had been given a date rape drug at a party. She passed out and woke up naked,

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surrounded by several men. She was able to get out of the house, then called her parents and went to the hospital. The advocate helped the teenager and her parents understand the Sexual Assault Response Team process, especially when the responding officers were more interested in her underage drinking than the sexual assault. In addition to being there for support while the young woman went through the forensic exam and a police interview, the advocate continued to work with the family, connecting them to counseling and other resources.

These are just a few of the 18,000 calls that New Jersey sexual violence programs responded to in 2008. These programs are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for survivors of sexual assault and their loved ones.

In FY 2009, the 21 county-based sexual violence programs received \$1 million to provide services to survivors of sexual assault through a line item for Rape Prevention via the Division on Women in the Department of Community Affairs. In FY 2010, that amount was cut to \$900,000. We are requesting that the programs be funded at the \$1 million amount that had been in place for many years. Last year's ten percent cut drove our safety net programs, which were already barely covering their costs, to the edge. Many programs are in danger of closing and have had to lay off staff and cut services. Funding the sexual violence programs through the state at \$1 million would help keep these programs operating, keep their staff employed, and ensure that survivors have a place to turn when they most need help.

The New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault speaks for the countless survivors of sexual assault and their loved ones in New Jersey, and represents the 21 county-based sexual violence programs in New Jersey, plus the Sexual Assault Services and Crime Victim Assistance program at Rutgers University. The sexual violence programs in New Jersey provide a variety of services to survivors of sexual assault, including:

- 24-hour crisis response of a Confidential Sexual Violence Advocate. A Confidential Sexual Violence Advocate is a specially trained advocate whose interactions with a client are protected by legal confidentiality.
- 24-hour hotline.
- Individual counseling for survivors and significant others as well as group counseling.
- Response to Sexual Assault Response Team activation (SART). These teams are made up of law enforcement officers, a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner and a Confidential Sexual Violence Advocate that respond to survivors who need forensic exams.
- Legal, medical, and systems advocacy.
- Information and referral services.
- Community education and prevention work.

Our member programs operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, serving survivors of sexual violence and their loved ones. In 2008, our programs worked with 4200 victims of sexual assault

through hotline calls, counseling sessions or accompaniments to police stations, hospitals or court. They provided over 11,700 hours of counseling to victims and their significant others.

These sexual violence programs operate on very little money. The \$1 million from DCA has been divided among the 21 county-based programs, with programs averaging around \$49,000 each. The state line item has historically been the only money sexual violence programs can count on to fund services. Many also receive funding through the competitive Victim Assistance Grants or Violence Against Women Act funds, but those funds have become more competitive throughout the years and sexual violence programs are receiving less of that money. Most of our programs sit within bigger non-profits, whose funding has also decreased during this recession, meaning less support within their host agencies to make up any losses in funding as well as fewer private and foundation grants.

This instability of funding means that programs don't always know how long they can continue to work with survivors, as they may have to lay off staff if the next grant cycle doesn't go well. Before nearly every grant award is made, NJCASA receives calls from its members wondering whether they need to close out their client case-loads because they are not sure of where the funding will come from to sustain their services.

An estimated 1 million of today's NJ citizens will experience a rape or attempted rape in their lifetimes. Sexual violence programs are the only place survivors can turn to 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Advocates answer the phone at all hours to listen to men and women talk about some of the most intimate and traumatic events of their lives. They get up in the middle of the night to meet survivors at hospitals and police stations, so that no survivor is forced to go through the experience alone. They counsel people who were assaulted twenty years ago and people who were assaulted twenty minutes ago. And for every survivor, family member, or friend who calls a sexual violence program, trained sexual violence advocates are there to listen, to help, and most importantly to believe.

In many counties, the bulk of the after-hours hotline work is done by a very committed group of volunteers, supervised by a handful of paid staff who also do counseling, training and educational programs, and who staff the hotline during the day. The funding that actually goes to the sexual violence programs is far below what the programs actually need. NJCASA estimates that to fund the most basic services of the state sexual violence programs in New Jersey would cost about \$218,279 per program. This would include paying for hotline staff, one full time caseworker, one part-time caseworker, one full time outreach and prevention worker and on-call staff.

Basic Services Per County Program

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|--|---|----------|
| • 24-hour Hotline (365 x \$7.12x24) + 15% fringe | = | \$72,029 |
| • 1 Full-time Caseworker @ \$45,000 + 25% fringe | = | \$56,250 |
| • 1 Half-time Caseworker @ \$25,000 + 15% fringe | = | \$28,750 |

• 1 Full-time Outreach worker @ \$35,000 + 25% fringe	=	\$43,750
• <u>On-call advocates</u>	=	\$17,500
	Total =	\$218,279

Sexual violence programs are funded at far less than \$218,279 per year through federal and state money. At best, our programs receive about \$136,895 per year in federal and state funds.

Best case funding scenario

• CDC Rape Prevention	=	\$38,845
• State line item	=	\$43,000
• <u>VOA funds (VAWA STOP formula cap is \$45,000)</u>	=	\$55,000
	Total =	\$136,845

In the long run, funds not spent now will be spent later. Sexual violence costs New Jersey money and the less support survivors receive, the more trouble they have later. Sexual violence is thought to be one of the most costly crimes. The National Institute of Justice reports that one incident of adult sexual assault costs \$87,000 to its survivor: \$5,100 in tangible expenses and \$81,400 in intangible (quality of life) costs. For child sexual abuse, the full cost to its victim per incident is \$99,000, \$9,500 of which is in tangible costs.¹ Sexual assault survivors are more likely to smoke, use alcohol, and are more likely to have a number of illnesses such as gastrointestinal issues or back pain.

Economic cost to businesses and society is also significant. In a 1996 study in Michigan the larger economic impact of sexual assault was calculated at \$6.5 billion, or \$700 per resident.² Scaled for New Jersey the economic loss would be \$5.59 billion (based on 86% of Michigan's population). Providing support and funding prevention efforts help minimize those costs to survivors and to New Jersey.

NJCASA and its sexual violence program members are part of the social safety net. The vast majority of sexual assault cases never get to the police or the prosecutor. In many cases, the advocate on one end of the phone is the first person to ever hear the words "I was raped" from the survivor on the other end of the line. For many survivors, the support that our programs are able to give them -- through counseling, information and advocacy -- is what allows them to be able to make a report to the police and go through the criminal justice process. For others, our support helps them just get through their day. We are part of the safety net through our counseling and support for survivors who don't know where else to turn. But our part of the safety net is close to fraying as our programs' sources of funding dwindle and disappear.

¹ Miller, Ted R, et al. *Victim Cost and Consequences: A New Look*. National Institute of Justice. 1996.

² Post, LA et al. "The rape tax: tangible and intangible costs of sexual violence." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 2000.



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As the numbers above show, there is already a funding gap of at least \$1.71 million for the provision of effective services to survivors of sexual violence. The item for Rape Prevention under the Department of Community Affairs in the FY 2011 budget needs to be maintained at least at the previous level of support of \$1 million for survivors of sexual violence.

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