

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

HEARINGS  
BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SELECT EDUCATION  
OF THE  
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND LABOR  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
NINETY-FIFTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

ON

H.R. 7927 and H.R. 8948

TO AUTHORIZE THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH, EDUCATION,  
AND WELFARE TO ESTABLISH A GRANT PROGRAM TO DE-  
VELOP METHODS OF PREVENTION AND TREATMENT RELAT-  
ING TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

HEARINGS HELD IN WASHINGTON, D.C.,  
ON MARCH 16 AND 17, 1978

use of the Committee on Education and Labor  
CARL D. PERKINS, *Chairman*



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TESTIMONY

OF

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PRESENTED TO

SELECT EDUCATION COMMITTEE

U. S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

March 16, 1978

We already know that safehouses, hot lines and a national clearing-house of information are needed to reduce domestic violence. I refer you to the testimony provided to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights on January 30 and 31, 1978, to that provided before the House Subcommittee on Domestic and International Scientific Planning, Analysis and Cooperation, in February, 1978, and to the testimony presented before the Senate Subcommittee on Child and Human Development on March 4 and March 8. I would therefore like to address myself to the mechanics of a comprehensive program for services to battered spouses, siblings and parents. While I advocate a program to provide services to all victims of battering, I think we should keep in mind that the majority of domestic violence victims are women beaten by men with whom they are having an intimate relationship. Statistics from New York City hospitals for six months in 1977, show that there were 490 cases of battered wives and 2 cases of battered husbands. Dr. Richard Gelles, a sociologist at the University of Rhode Island, reports that 47% of the husbands in his sample hit their wives regularly, while only 11% of the wives hit their husbands regularly. The battered man case is the "man bites dog" type of story picked up by the press. For years women have been beaten as a matter of routine and, as such, did not attract the attention of the press.

I am employed by the Colorado Association for Aid to Battered Women as Project Director of a national study of services to battered women. The Project, entitled "Services to Battered Women: A Study of Diverse Models, Rationale for Development, and a Strategy to Determine Effectiveness of Services", has located approximately 500 shelters and alternate services for battered women. We have sent them a questionnaire (a copy of which I have submitted with my testimony, Appendix A) and from the returns on this instrument we will select 8 representative programs. These programs and their

community support systems will be studied intensively in site-visits. We will choose the representative programs on the basis of geography, population served, services provided and funding sources, among other criteria. The result of our nine-month grant will be a monograph which will propose future procedures for evaluation. I have submitted a more detailed description of the objectives and activities of the Project. (See Appendix B.) We are particularly interested in studying programs that have made use of existing federal funds. For example, a few centers have managed to secure HUD funding through their local Community Development Block Program. Several shelters have obtained staffing money through the Department of Labor's (CETA) program. Others have been able to make use of Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) and Community Services Administration (CSA) funds. The results of our study will be valuable in helping programs conceptualize plans for securing funds and providing treatment alternatives. It is my belief that the results will prove useful to any agency formed by the legislation currently pending in Congress.

In working on this project I have corresponded and met with battered women, services providers, researchers, government employees, governors, and commissions on the status of women. I have learned much and would like to make recommendations to you today on the basis of the information I have gathered from them.

First, I recommend that the results of our research project should be considered by whatever agency is mandated as a result of the current legislation. Too often, research projects are conducted and yield valuable information which is not utilized in program development. Let us not re-invent the wheel by duplicating our efforts.

Second, the problem of battered women is not something that can be

solved with a temporary, volunteer program. The combined effort of various professions and government agencies will be required to tackle this most distressing form of violence.

It is generally agreed that the proposed program should be placed within HEW. However, interest in battered women has been expressed by persons in HUD, LEAA, CETA and CSA. For example, there was the possibility that our project would publish a directory of services to battered women. However, directories were already being published by Betsy Warrior of the National Coalition Network, and the Center for Women Policy Studies which has been funded by LEAA. I contacted these people and we worked out an arrangement whereby we would share names and addresses and they would be responsible for the directory. I am now able to devote more of our resources to in-depth site visits and publication of a monograph.

Another source of cooperation is HUD. I have learned that there is a potential source of assistance to programs for battered women within HUD's programs. Many shelters are not receiving these services either because (a) they don't know about them or (b) they have applied for them and have been turned down due to a misinterpretation of HUD's regulations. At present, a number of HUD's programs have regulations which do not clearly specify battered women as recipients of the services. First, the regulations for the Community Block Development Program should be re-written to specify the rehabilitation of buildings for the purpose of supplying local emergency shelters for battered women. Secondly, the rent subsidy program, which creates a balance between one-fourth of a person's income and the fair market price for an apartment should clearly state that a woman's eligibility for the program should be based upon her income, not her husband's. Eligibility for housing through local housing authorities should likewise be based upon the woman's income.

Finally, homes for which FHA mortgages have been foreclosed often become city property. HUD should be making an attempt to use these abandoned buildings for emergency shelter for battered women. If necessary, Community Development Block Grants should be awarded to rehabilitate the buildings.

There is also room for co-operation with the Defense Department. To my knowledge, the only existing services for battered spouses on the military bases are the Chaplains. Military personnel should be educated with regard to treatment alternatives for battering couples. Funds for the establishment of safe houses either on or adjacent to military bases should be provided by the Defense Department. VA counselors should also be educated in the dynamics and treatment of wife abuse.

The co-operative effort I am advocating should include programs dealing with the treatment and prevention of alcoholism and drug abuse. There is evidence that in many cases alcoholism and spouse abuse are related (Grambs, 1977). However, there are also cases in which the treatment program itself leads to domestic violence. Persons involved in such treatment programs undergo frustrating experiences, one example of which is aversive conditioning. These frustrations can result in the person's lashing out at a family member. Thus, the dynamics of the battering relationship need to be made known to service providers. There is a definite cycle to the battering relationship (Walker, in press, a, b). For a comprehensive description of treatment alternatives for battered women and batterers, I refer you to Dr. Lenore Walker's testimony before the House Subcommittee on Domestic and International Scientific Planning, Analysis and Cooperation (Appendix C). We cannot assume that alcohol and drug rehabilitation people know the antecedents and dynamics of spouse abuse. Likewise, safe house personnel should become more knowledgeable of the consequences of drug and alcohol abuse treatment programs.

I recommend that an Advisory Board be established for the purpose of co-ordinating the efforts of all the agencies concerned with spouse abuse. This Board should consist of representatives from the Community Services Administration and the Departments of Defense, Justice, Labor, Housing and Urban Development, and Health, Education and Welfare, including the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights, and the Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration.

My third recommendation is that monies be provided to existing services to battered spouses, rather than setting up demonstration projects for study. There already exist a diversity of services, including some shelters with creative administrative and staffing procedures, and comprehensive services such as psychological and legal counseling, welfare advocacy, job training, counseling and placement, counseling of the batterer, couples counseling, child care, Parent Effectiveness Training, Parent's Anonymous and on and on. If we want to study the effect of these services, let's look at programs presently in existence. If there aren't enough programs providing comprehensive services, then let's fund existing shelters that have limited services and help them along. This would certainly be more cost-effective than setting up demonstration projects which will not necessarily have the community backing that the present shelters have.

Naturally, it would be useful to set up programs in areas that are not currently being served. A balance should be struck between creating new programs where needed and supporting present programs.

Recommendation number four is that in funding these programs, let's not pull the rug out from under them after only one year. Yes, a program should be accountable from year to year, but it should not have to re-apply on a competitive basis each year for a 3-year funding period. The stability of

a 3-year contract (even if the percentage of funding decreases from year to year) allows the shelter to devote time and effort to the establishment of a more permanent funding source.

My 5th recommendation is that there be an on-going research program to determine the effectiveness of treatment alternatives and government policies. Let me make it clear that I am not advocating research of an esoteric or purely academic nature. That type of study has its place but it is not in this legislation. We need the type of research that will answer practical questions. I offer a few examples:

a. What are the existing statutes in the 50 states which pertain to domestic violence and in what ways do these statutes facilitate and/or inhibit individuals' rights? What is the effect of these statutes on the provision of services to battered spouses, siblings and parents?

b. It is clear that HEW appropriations will never be able to provide all the services needed to battered victims and batterers. In the not too distant future we may find that federal and private health insurance programs will be able to pick up part of the tab for mental health-related services. For this to occur, however, we must be able to show that the programs are beneficial. Likewise, we will have to set standards for accreditation of programs. Research is needed to validate procedures now in use and to determine what quality standards are appropriate. The time for this research is now. We cannot afford to lose this opportunity for validation.

c. I see a need for on-going research sponsored by NIMH. The Center for the Study of Crime and Delinquency has demonstrated a long-standing commitment to answering questions about battering and battered spouses. Long before this topic received national recognition, the

Center was sponsoring research on violence in the family. I would like the new legislation to ensure that the Center for the Study of Crime and Delinquency will be able to continue this type of research.

d. Technical assistance should be given to help consolidate and analyze the demographic and evaluation data currently being collected by service providers.

e. Research is needed on the prevention of domestic violence. Individuals working in the area of child abuse have speculated that child abuse lays the groundwork for violent behavior and eventual spouse abuse. This is really a chicken or egg type of question. It is just as likely the spouse abuse teaches violence which will eventually lead to child abuse. Actually many child abuse workers report children to be accidental victims of intended spouse abuse or that they are used by the wives as shields from attacks by husbands. Preventive measures must be researched so that they can then be utilized in schools, media, and community organizations.

My 6th recommendation is that technical assistance be given to shelters that are fairly new and/or are experiencing difficulties. Government employees can aid the shelters in grant-writing skills and to a certain extent in implementing programs. But let's not legislate out the expertise of the grass roots women who have been providing services and have been learning from that experience. I encourage the employment of a significant number of these women as technical assistants to the federal program.

Once again I would like to stress the fact that most cases of spouse abuse are cases of battered women. While it is true that some men are beaten by women, the incidence, frequency and severity of the beatings are less than that of men beating women. Dr. Suzanne Steinmetz's data, which has

received much media attention, indicates that husband beating is just as common as wife beating. However, her data analyses have met with considerable scientific criticism. For a complete criticism of her statistical procedures, I refer you to the Winter, 1978 issue of Victimology.

My final recommendation is that this program be placed within the Office of Human Development Services in HEW. This office has demonstrated its concern with battered women in the funding of The Colorado Association's grant. One advantage of placing the program in this agency is that it will provide a smooth transition from our preliminary study to an extensive program. Another advantage is that OHDS oversees the Administration for Children, Youth and Families as well as other programs. As such, it allows for the cross-cutting of services provided by different agencies and departments. Also, OHDS is responsible for the research that takes place in its subagencies, while the individual agencies are more geared up to provide direct services. By placing the program in OHDS there will be the flexibility to formulate new program-delivery procedures. Once a program on domestic violence is established, it can then be placed into an agency such as ACYF. I caution you not to combine a program on Spouse Abuse with one on Child Abuse. The battered spouse is in need of unique psychological, legal and housing services. Much still needs to be learned specifically about the dynamics of the battering couple and the success of various treatment approaches. As Mr. Besharov, Director of the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect has said, the mere fact that spouse abuse and child abuse seem to be somewhat related problems should not lead to the assumption that they necessarily be treated together or in the same way.

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## EDUCATION

- B.A. 1969: University of Rochester, N.Y. (Psychology)  
 M.Ed. 1972: Temple University, Philadelphia, Pa. (Educational Psychology)  
 Ph.D. 1977: Temple University (Educational Psychology with emphasis in Human Development)

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Consultant, Region VIII Head Start, Contracting Corporation of America, Denver, Colorado 1977-  
 Project Director, HEW Services to Battered Women Project, Colorado Association for Aid to Battered Women, Denver, Colorado Dec. 1977-  
 Resource Person, University Without Walls, Loretto Heights College, Denver, 1975-  
 Instructor, Departments of Psychology and Education, University of Colorado at Denver. 1977-1978  
 Instructor, Department of Education, Metropolitan State College, Denver. 1975-1977  
 Instructor, Department of Social Sciences, Community College of Denver. 1975-1976  
 In-Service Co-ordinator for Special Education, Arapahoe County School District # Six, Littleton, Colorado. 1974-1975  
 Teaching Associate, College of Education, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pa. 1971-1973

## OTHER INFORMATION

- Member, Society for Research in Child Development 1973-  
 Member, The Jean Piaget Society 1971-  
 Board of Directors, The Jean Piaget Society 1971-1973  
 Membership Chairperson, The Jean Piaget Society 1971-1973  
 Member, Colorado Association for Children with Learning Disabilities 1974, 75  
 Member, Colorado Association for Aid to Battered Women (CAABW) 1977-  
 Co-Chairperson, Membership Task Force, CAABW 1977-  
 Member, Legislative Task Force, CAABW 1978-  
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 Membership Application Pending:  
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## PAPER AND PUBLICATIONS

- Elkind, D. Anagnostopoulou, R. & Back, S.M. Determinants of part-whole perception in children. Child Development, 1970, 41, 391-397.
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**END**