



January 28, 2016

TO: Rep. Maxine Grad, Chair
Rep. Willem Jewett, Vice-Chair
House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Auburn Watersong, Associate Director of Public Policy

RE: H.533 - Victim Notification

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill concerning notification of victims in domestic violence cases.

The Network fully supports H.533 as written. In order for victims to adequately plan for their own safety, and possibly the safety of their children, it is vital that they receive any information concerning any bail or conditions of release prior to arraignment or an initial court appearance and are notified upon offender discharge from probation.

Network member programs report serious concerns regarding the notification of victims upon the release of an offender from the custody of the Department of Mental Health. Specific concerns include the release of high risk offenders who complete their maximum time with the Department of Corrections and then are committed to DMH custody, committed to DMH custody and later discharged, all while posing a significant risk to their victims. Thus it is also critical that victims receive notification from their State's Attorney Victim's Advocate when a defendant is released from the custody of the Department of Mental Health.

The Network supports this bill as written.