

NORTH WEST ACCOUNTABILITY PROGRAM

FRANKLIN COUNTY

Judy Rickstad

February 13, 2018

Maida Townsend

Chair, Government Operations Committee

Re: Bill H.689 (Funding for Domestic Violence Accountability Program)

Dear Rep. Townsend and Committee Members,

I am writing to request your support of House Bill H.689 which is intended to help with the costs of running Domestic Violence Accountability Programs and to fund the Domestic Violence Coordinator position.

I started the North West Accountability Program in Franklin County 2 years ago and have since been coordinating and facilitating the program in accordance to the Statewide Standards. There are currently 2 groups, with 10 men in each group, and a third group being considered.

I hold a strong belief it takes a Coordinated Community Response to end domestic violence against women and children. I am committed to providing a program that holds men accountable and challenges their belief systems that support the use of violence.

In order for the Batterer's Intervention Programs, around the state, to be able to provide quality groups to participants there needs to be funding in place. There is a substantial cost to running groups: Co-facilitation, on-going education and trainings, domestic violence task force meetings, equipment and materials, and to assist in providing subsidies.

I am painfully aware of how much domestic violence continues to cost our state through emergency room visits, medical expenses, the court process and the housing of women and children who are escaping their dangerous home situation. I urge the Committee Members to support the House Bill so we can continue to provide quality programs to end the cycle of domestic violence in the State of Vermont.

Sincerely,

Judy Rickstad

North West Accountability Program