

From the Office of Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz

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For Immediate Release

CONTACT: Larry Perosino - 860/509-6259

BYSIEWICZ WANTS ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY PROGRAM

Secretary of the State would work to protect victims' location

Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz is asking the Legislature to allow her office to implement an Address Confidentiality Program for victims of crimes such as domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and risk of injury to a minor.

Under the program, participants would be assigned a confidential mailing address at the Secretary of the State's office to protect a victim's actual location. State and municipal government agencies would be required to use the new address in their official records, including for freedom of information requests and voting purposes.

"Address confidentiality can help break the chain that allows abusers to reach their victims by tracking their address through public records," Bysiewicz said. "Victims of domestic violence and other crimes can limit the threat of danger in their lives and create a safer existence for themselves and their children."

The Connecticut Department of Public Safety reported 18,450 victims of crimes related to family violence in 2001. Address confidentiality programs are currently active in nine states including California, Massachusetts and Vermont. Washington started the nation's first such program in 1991.

Bysiewicz partnered with legislators, women's rights and victim advocacy groups as well as law enforcement agencies to develop the program through a Connecticut Law Revision Commission study.

Supporters of the Address Confidentiality Program include Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Attorney General's Office, Office of Victim Services, Office of the Victim Advocate, Chief State's Attorney, Chief Public Defender, Permanent Commission on the Status of Women and the Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund.

Bysiewicz' proposal is currently being considered by the Legislature's Judiciary Committee with the support of the committee's co-chairs Representative Michael Lawlor (D-East Haven) and Senator Andrew McDonald (D-Stamford).