

House Republican Press Release

March 10, 2008
Press Office: 860-240-8700

Murdered Terryville Woman's Family, Friends Testify on Bill to Protect Family Violence Victims



Family members, in-laws and friends of Jennifer Magnano of Terryville, who was murdered by her husband last August, testified today in favor of a bill that would allow family violence victims who fear for their safety to offer court testimony via teleconference rather than being forced to appear in person.

The legislation (**House Bill 5875**) which was developed by state Representative William A. Hamzy, R-78th District, was considered at a public hearing today before the state legislature's Judiciary Committee.

Mrs. Magnano had left Terryville on April 14, 2007 with her son and two daughters and fled to California to escape an abusive relationship with her husband Scott Magnano. Forced by a court order to return to Connecticut to testify in person in her divorce and child custody battle with her husband, she was murdered by Scott Magnano in the front yard of their Terryville home at about 11 p.m. August 23, 2007.

Jennifer Magnano and two of her children, who had been staying with friends, had returned to the home to pick up some belongings, when her husband, who was under a court order to stay away from her, forced her into the front yard and shot her. A few hours later, police found Scott Magnano a short distance from the house, dead of an apparent self-inflicted gun shot wound.

"We had to come back to Connecticut," Jessica Rosenbeck, 22, Jennifer Magnano's daughter, testified. "Scott had somehow gotten custody of my siblings, and my mom had to fight him in court. She considered just running away with us, but she always tried to do the right thing. We went to lawyers, court hearings, did everything we were told, but it wasn't enough. No one took us seriously and my mother paid the price. No other family should know the pain we feel each day, and I hope with the passing of a bill like this, that can be possible."

"I am here today to testify in support of H. B. 5875 because the court system failed us," said David Magnano, 16, Jennifer and Scott Magnano's son. "We relied on and followed the current system and it failed us. And because of that, my sisters and I are now without our mother. My nine-year-old sister now lives on the other side of the country; the other side of the continent. And for the rest of her childhood and the rest of my childhood, we will get to see each other maybe five or six times a year. [My mother] was an honest woman who always followed the rules, and she was a good mother, and she paid the price for it. The courts, the police, every government agency involved, did nothing to protect my mom."

Saying his mother had told him: “I do not want to be just another statistic,” David Magnano added: “We are here today to make sure that my mother is NOT just another statistic.”

Lisa Magnano, Jennifer Magnano’s sister-in-law, testified that a police officer had told Jen that after reading the court order requiring Scott Magnano to come no closer than 300 feet from his wife, “that because it was a civil order, he would not have been able to arrest Scott [if he violated the order].”

“This is why [this legislation] would be important in helping victims in these situations – because the perpetrators of these crimes do not have respect for the court system and feel they are above the law or any order from the courts. Because of Scott’s disregard for the court system, we now have two children who are not being raised with the tender love and guidance of their dear mother,” Lisa Magnano told the committee.

“Jennifer Magnano had good reason to fear for her life when she returned to Connecticut to fight for the custody of her children,” said Representative Hamzy. “If Connecticut law had allowed her to teleconference her testimony from a safe location unknown to her husband Scott, she would be alive and her children would be living with her today. Instead, she was ordered to return to Terryville, where she clearly was in danger, and paid a horrible price because she obeyed the law. This legislation, which Jennifer’s family and friends hope will become known as ‘Jen’s Law’ if it passes, could save the lives of hundreds of women in her situation for years to come.”