



In-Session Newsletter February 6th, 2023

Today marks **Day 13** of our 2023 Legislative Session.

Last week we spoke with law makes about our legislative priorities including **Funding for State Certified Domestic Violence Shelters, Address Confidentiality, and Safe Time**. The beginning of the week we met with Governor Kemp's office as well as the office of planning and budget. During this meeting we discussed the need for **Address Confidentiality** as well as adequate **funding for shelters**. The information was received well, and we left with a request for more data. We met with the Secretary of State's Office about **Address Confidentiality** and worked with Legislative Council on making edits to the bill draft. The Secretary of State's Office asked good questions. The final bill draft has been sent to Vice-Chairman Gaines as we prepare for the bill to be introduced this week!

Thank You!

Thanks to Chairmen Bill Hitchens and Matt Hatchett, the house passed their version of the amended FY23 budget aka "the little budget." In it, **\$2.4M was included to improve security systems for shelters and \$2M to offset VOCA cuts**. This week the Senate will hold Hearings for considering the persistent needs of domestic violence shelters in their appropriations.

CALL TO ACTION:

We are asking you to please reach out to [Chairman Hitchens](#) and [Chairman Hatchett](#) to thank them for their support! A simple phone call to their office will be great. You will likely only be leaving a message to say thank you for the allocation in the little budget for domestic violence shelters. As a part of our overall strategy, we are asking programs to reach out to certain members of the legislature to ask their support. Be on the lookout for an email and phone call from me soon!



As soon as the “little budget” passes, they will move onto the “big budget” for FY24.

Our Ask: \$11M increase in our state allocation for the 48 state-certified domestic violence shelters. This will bring our state allocation up from 30% to 50% to meet the 47 state standards and support core services for victims of domestic and sexual violence. The standards provide a baseline for service provision, regardless of geographic location so that victims in distress are not met with wildly different service levels across the state.

Last week we also met with Rep. Jasmine Clark to express our concerns about her plans to introduce another bill supporting **50/50 Custody Presumption** in custody adjudications. Research has shown time and again that 50/50 presumption has a disparate impact on abused children and domestic violence survivors. For this reason, we spent the past two years defeating [HB96](#). The meeting with Rep. Clark went very well. By the end of the meeting, she affirmed her commitment to survivors and agreed not to introduce another bill this year, while also considering a study committee instead so that both sides of the issue can talk to each other. We also shared with Rep. Clark the federal VAWA Reauthorization Statute that includes [Title XV](#) which makes children the first priority in custody adjudications and also recommends judicial training in domestic violence, child abuse and custody. Rep. Clark was very interested in bringing our state statute in alignment with the federal statute. If this issue is of interest to you, please reach out to [Rep. Jasmine Clark](#) and share your story.

And lastly, we met with Chairman Dempsey to discuss **Safe Time** and the budget. Chairman Dempsey listened intently to our talking points and asked good questions. She advised us to seek Chairman Strickland’s opinion on whether or not a Safe Time bill should exist as a stand-alone bill or attached to another bill already moving.

STAND WITH SURVIVORS DAY

We are back in person! This year Stand With Survivors Days will be held the 13th and 14th of February. Starting with a virtual Advocacy 101 training February 13th from 10:00-11:30am and Kicking-off our Lobby Day on February 14th from 9:00am-10:30am at Central Presbyterian Church. Hurry & Register. Registration closes soon!

[REGISTER](#)