

PATRICK-MURRAY ADMINISTRATION RELEASES FUNDS TO FIGHT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

BOSTON - Tuesday, February 9, 2010 - The Patrick-Murray Administration today announced that it has made available \$708,400 in federal funds to the Commonwealth's District Attorneys to target violent crimes against women, including domestic and dating violence, and sexual assault and stalking. The funds, from the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and other federal sources, were awarded through the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS) to the state's 11 District Attorneys' offices. Additionally, Governor Deval Patrick will sign legislation this afternoon to further strengthen protections for victims of sexual violence.

"As we see in tough fiscal times like these, levels of stress and aggravation rise and cities and towns all across the Commonwealth receive more calls for responses to domestic violence," said Governor Patrick. "These grants will help District Attorneys working with other law enforcement agencies maintain core victim services and more effectively identify and respond to violent crimes against women."

"Law enforcement programs supporting victims of sexual assault and domestic violence are critical to ensure safety for residents across the Commonwealth," said Lieutenant Governor Timothy P. Murray, chair of the Governor's Council to Address Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence. "Thanks to the support and advocacy of our congressional delegation, VAWA stimulus and other federal funds will further assist our administration's efforts to maintain and strengthen law enforcement and protection services that address violence against women during these challenging economic times."

Each District Attorney's office will receive grants of \$64,400 to develop and improve effective law enforcement strategies, advocacy and services addressing violent crimes against women. VAWA's Stop Program promotes a coordinated, multidisciplinary approach to enhancing advocacy and improving the criminal justice system's response through enhanced statewide collaboration efforts among law enforcement, prosecution, nonprofit, nongovernmental victim advocacy and service providers, and the courts.

"Violence against women disgusts me. As a young prosecutor, I saw firsthand its devastating effects. It impacts every aspect of a woman's life from her physical safety to her ability to earn a living to how she cares for her family. These investments will allow 11 District Attorney's offices to continue doing everything possible to put an end to this unacceptable violence," said Senator John Kerry.

"I have been a consistent and strong supporter of measures seeking to reduce violence against women in the United States and worldwide, and I am pleased the Commonwealth has directed these funds to District Attorneys to expand stalking prevention and victim support programs. I will continue to work with my colleagues to ensure women receive appropriate protections," said Congressman John Tierney.

"I am pleased that these grants - which will provide for greater resources to combat violence against women - have been awarded to District Attorney Offices in Massachusetts," said Congressman William

Delahunt, a former Norfolk County DA who established the first prosecutorial unit in the nation to combat domestic violence and provide services to victims. "These funds will help survivors who have the courage to end the cycle of abuse and will work towards preventing future violence."

"These federal funds are extremely important right now and will help our District Attorneys and law enforcement agencies address violence against women while providing services to assist survivors," said Congressman Stephen F. Lynch. "While many programs are suffering due to cuts in funding, I am very pleased that Governor Patrick is maintaining these critical domestic support services."

"We hope this funding furthers the mission by supporting their efforts and strengthening their law enforcement and prosecution strategies to combat violent crimes against women," said Public Safety and Security Secretary Mary Beth Heffernan. "More services are desperately needed."

"The grant will provide welcome assistance in our continuing fight against domestic violence, and in helping victims," said Essex District Attorney Jonathan W. Blodgett.

"We are grateful for the additional funds from this grant. It will allow us to hire a much needed, specialized Domestic Violence prosecutor in the Wareham District Court. In 2009, the police departments in that area responded to over 420 domestic violence calls," said Plymouth District Attorney Timothy J. Cruz.