



January 29, 2024

Dear Virginia House of Delegates Courts of Justice Civil Subcommittee Members:

Please allow this letter to serve as the position of the Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence for the 24th Judicial District (Coalition) in support of HB 766, as amended.

Our Coalition is composed of regional members made up of a diverse group of agencies, organizations, individuals and survivors. These members are dedicated to providing leadership and guidance in preventative measures in ending the cycle of violence in our community. The coalition members include victim advocates, commonwealth's attorneys, legal assistants, law enforcement officers, probation and pretrial services, forensic nurses, mental health professionals, sexual assault response personnel as well as concerned citizens.

We support HB766, as amended, because the cycle of violence is real and statistically children that grow up in a home with any form of domestic violence are more likely to engage in high-risk behavior including smoking, drinking alcohol and drug use. Children that are subjected to domestic violence in the home are 6 times more likely to commit suicide and 50% more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol. In addition, children raised in abusive homes learn that violence is an appropriate way to solve conflict. These children are more likely than their peers to be in abusive intimate partner relationships in the future, either as victims or perpetrators (NCADV). According to domesticviolence.org, "In 2020, there were 541 homicide victims in Virginia, more than half of those were committed by an intimate partner." This bill is a safety net to help children live a life free of violence, abuse, and trauma. Our children are our future and providing the necessary resources, training and educational materials to those that have the safety of our children in their hand could help save lives.

While we are aware that neither every story or outcome are the same, HB766, as amended, would help give our children the lives they deserve to live.

Sincerely,

Toy D Eagle, Chair

**Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
For the 24th Judicial District**
901 Church Street
Lynchburg, VA 24504
www.cadv-24.org