

Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence 2023 Policy Priorities

Enhancing Victim Rights=Ensuring Access to Support & Justice for *all* Victims

The Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence represents 21 local crime victim service provider agencies supporting survivors in every Iowa county. Intimate partner violence (IPV) remains a preventable but persistent public health problem with epidemic levels of prevalence. ICADV is committed to advancing policies to address the urgent needs of survivors as well as promoting comprehensive responses to violence and effective solutions for ending and preventing it.

Invest \$10 million in state funding to improve access to crime victim support services. Everyone cares about victims, but it takes money and people to provide support. Iowa invests only \$5 million in dedicated state funds for crime victim support services. Federal funds enhance service provider capacity, but state funds help pay for the staff and infrastructure needed to support Iowa's nationally recognized crime victim service provider network.

Enhance Economic Security to improve access to safety & prevent violence. Escaping violence means losing economic security and the means to regain it. Ensuring people can meet basic needs helps prevent violence, e.g., affordable housing, livable wages, food, health care, good schools, clean air/water.

- Allow early lease termination for IPV victims to reduce a major barrier to leaving a violent home.
- Seal eviction records for all renters who were not evicted or were evicted long ago.
- Expand access: health care including mental & reproductive health services; food assistance; economic supports. Eliminate barriers: burdensome eligibility requirements, technology, language, discrimination.
- Bolster employment & financial security, e.g., prize-linked savings programs, paid leave, minimum wage increase, expanding earned income and child-care tax credits.

Improve legal system access to justice & victim rights for *all* crime victims, including IPV victims arrested or convicted. Improve education and training of legal system professionals to ensure an IPV victim-informed approach; create multiple options for violence intervention responsive to needs of victims/communities; address systemic disparities.

- Ensure IPV victims are not punished for surviving: zero tolerance for victim intimidation & coercion; stop arresting victims for violating their own protective orders; prevent dual arrests.
- Ensure immigrant IPV survivors can access legal protections available in current law, e.g., promote statewide standard for U visa certification so victims are not denied access to safety based on where they live.
- Promote systemic changes to achieve equitable access to justice: ensure objectivity and consistency in commutation process; promote effective reforms (probation, parole, bail) to address disparities, reduce recidivism, and promote access to behavioral change interventions for people who have harmed others.

Prioritize policies to help prevent and end violence - enhance equity across all systems to ensure freedom from violence at home and in communities. Inequity is a root cause of violence. Biases and discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, immigration status, ableness, criminal record, etc., impact how individuals experience violence; how victims access justice; how systems and people respond; how needs are met. Meeting the needs of those carrying the heaviest burden of disparity helps all survivors.

- Ensure employment non-discrimination and safety: protect against workplace harassment and violence; enforce job protections for victims; enact fair chance hiring for Iowans with criminal records (ban the box).
- Uphold civil rights laws: oppose weakening anti-discrimination protections, e.g., religious exemptions or prohibitions reducing access to employment, housing, and services.
- Reduce barriers to voting; advance constitutional amendment to permanently restore voting rights for Iowans with felony convictions.