

(H. B. 189)

(No. 102)

(Approved September 27, 2009)

AN ACT

To amend subsection (e) of Section 9 of Act No. 20 of April 11, 2001, as amended, known as the “Women’s Advocate Office Act,” in order to establish an information network and adequate support resources to tend to young and adult women who have been victims of domestic violence; and for other purposes.

STATEMENT OF MOTIVES

In Puerto Rico, the code of laws in effect regarding domestic violence is at the forefront in seeking to achieve the prevention and eradication of this serious social and public health malady. Act No. 54 approved on August 15, 1989, as amended, known as the “Domestic Violence Prevention and Intervention Act,” became the focal point of the public policy of the Government of Puerto Rico with respect to domestic violence. Hence, additional advancements have been subsequently achieved in the coordination of guidance, education, prevention, intervention, and support services to victims throughout the Island. At present, many government agencies and non-government entities are rendering such services. However, domestic violence is still rooted in Puerto Rican society.

Out of the total number of women murdered for any reason, forty-four percent (44%) have been murdered as a result of domestic violence (1993-2004 average). By 2004, such percentage increased to 51% of the total number of murdered women (61 murdered women, 31 of them as a result of domestic violence.) During 2006, there were reported 27 deaths of victims of violence, of which 23 were women; and by 2007, 19 deaths were reported, of which 15 were women.

Statistics furnished by the Puerto Rico Police in the fields of incidence and murder show that there is an urgent need to strengthen the tools within our reach to attain advancements in the prevention and eradication of domestic violence.

Information technology advancements provide us, in fact, the opportunity to broaden the access to the assistive tools available throughout the Island for the victims of domestic violence. For such reason, the establishment of an information network and adequate support resources to help our young and adult women who are victims of domestic violence, which shall include medical, psychological, educational, and assistive services, among others, shall contribute to promoting women's integrated assistive development and self-sufficiency. We are thus offering convenient means to identify the widest array of resources available, while affording greater access to such resources. For victims of domestic violence, providing them with expeditious access to information on available resources and assistive services could hold the key to saving their own lives.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF PUERTO RICO:

Section 1.- Subsection (e) of Section 9 of Act No. 20 of April 11, 2001, known as the "Women's Advocate Office Act," is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Section 9.- Functions and Duties of the Office

The Office shall have the following duties and functions, in addition to others provided in this Act or in the laws and programs whose administration or implementation it is charged with:

- (a) ...
- (e) To promote actions which contribute to solving the problem of violence against women in all manifestations. The Office shall establish an information network and adequate support resources to tend to young and adult women who have been victims of domestic violence, to wit: medical, psychological, educational, and assistive services, among others, to promote women’s integrated development and self-sufficiency.
- (f) ...”

Section 2.- This Act shall take effect immediately after its approval.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify to the Secretary of State that the following **Act No. 102 (H. B. 189)** of the **2nd Session of the 16th Legislature** of Puerto Rico:

AN ACT to amend subsection (e) of Section 9 of Act No. 20 of April 11, 2001, as amended, known as the “Women’s Advocate Office Act,” in order to establish an information network and adequate support resources to tend to young and adult women who have been victims of domestic violence; and for other purposes.

has been translated from Spanish to English and that the English version is correct.

In San Juan, Puerto Rico, on this 15th day of October, 2010.

Solange I. De Lahongrais, Esq.
Director