



NATIONAL NETWORK
TO END DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE

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NNEDV

January 13, 2009

Senator Christopher Dodd
Chairman
Senate Banking Committee
534 Dirksen Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Richard Shelby
Ranking Member
Senate Banking Committee
534 Dirksen Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Nomination of Shaun Donovan for Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development

Dear Chairman Dodd and Ranking Member Shelby:

On behalf of our membership including 56 state and U.S. territory domestic violence coalitions, their more than 2,000 local domestic violence member programs and the millions of domestic violence survivors who turn to them for services, the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) is writing to express its support for the nomination of Shaun Donovan as the Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Domestic violence is a leading cause of homelessness for women and children, as it forces women to make the unimaginable choice between life-threatening violence or potential homelessness. As the Commissioner of the New York City Housing Preservation and Development, Mr. Donovan acknowledged and addressed this connection by supporting the city's first housing subsidy program targeted to victims of domestic violence.

Although the link between domestic violence and homelessness is evident, victims often face an uphill battle in accessing homelessness services and finding safe and affordable housing. In 2005, the Violence Against Women Act included landmark provisions to prohibit discriminatory practices against victims of domestic violence in public housing and subsidized housing. Service providers, however, are still awaiting clarification on how to implement these provisions. Victims escaping domestic and sexual violence in need of safe refuge will depend on Mr. Donovan's leadership and commitment to ensure clear guidance and enforcement of these key provisions. Based on Mr. Donovan's record in New York City, we hope he will maintain his commitment to meeting the diverse and pressing needs of victims of domestic and sexual violence by supporting policies that ensure their safe access to affordable housing.

It is absolutely critical that the Secretary of the Department of Housing of Urban Development give close attention to the needs of victims of domestic and sexual violence and we believe that Mr. Donovan will do just that. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Monica McLaughlin at the National Network to End Domestic Violence at 202.543.5566 or via email at mmclaughlin@nnedv.org.

Sincerely,

Tralonne Shorter, Public Policy Director