

## Domestic Violence in the Workplace

- Domestic and sexual violence enters the workplace when abusers attempt to sabotage their victim's ability to work productively by threatening, attacking, stalking or harassing their victims at work.
- Domestic violence costs employers at least \$3 to \$5 billion a year in missed days of work and reduced productivity.<sup>1</sup>
- The violence is preventable if employers take steps to reduce a batterer's opportunity to threaten or harm the victim during the day.
- However many victims are too afraid to even tell their employer for fear of losing their job. Between on ¼ and ½ of domestic violence victims surveyed in 3 separate studies reported they lost a job due, in part, to domestic violence.<sup>2</sup>
- Similarly, 50% of sexual assault survivors lose their jobs or are forced to quit in the aftermath of the crime.<sup>3</sup> More than ¼ of stalking victims report losing time from work due to stalking and 7% never return to work.<sup>4</sup>
- Women sometimes are forced to leave their jobs in order to get themselves and their children safely away from the abuser. 32 states do not have laws stating that domestic violence is a "good cause" for leaving a job, in which case victims are often denied unemployment insurance.
- Economic instability is among the most formidable obstacles facing victims of domestic violence and it is crucial that victims of domestic violence are not re-victimized by a system that forces them to lose their jobs and insurance as a result of domestic violence.

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<sup>1</sup> Bureau of National Affairs, Special Report. NO. 32, Violence and Stress: The Work/Family Connection (1990).

<sup>2</sup> United States General Accounting Office, Domestic Violence: Prevalence and Implications for Employment Among Welfare Recipients, supra note 10, at 19 (Nov 1998).

<sup>3</sup> Special Report. No. 138, 103rd Cong., 2nd Session.54, n. 69 citing E. Ellis, B. Atkeson and K. Calhoun, An Assessment of the Long Term Reaction to Rape, 50J. Abnormal Psychology No. 3, 264 (1981).

<sup>4</sup> Patricia Tjaden & Nancy Thoennes, U.S. Department of Justice, Stalking in America: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey 11 (1998).