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Testimony of the
New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence
To the Joint Budget Hearing of the
Senate Standing Committee on Social Services,
Senate Standing Committee on Housing,
Construction and Community Development

Michele McKeon, Chief Executive Officer

The New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NYSCADV) is a membership organization comprised of over 140 domestic violence programs and shelters located throughout the State of New York committed to ending domestic violence through education, advocacy and social change. Founded in 1978, NYSCADV is a driving force in the development of hundreds of programs throughout New York that provide services for victims who are abused and their children. For more information: www.nyscadv.org.

NYSCADV submits this testimony in support of our member programs in New York City as well as in support of New York City residents who are victims of domestic violence. NYSCADV acknowledges the serious challenges that the national economic crisis has placed on New York State and its local jurisdictions but we implore our leaders to find ways to address shortages without jeopardizing the safety of victims of domestic violence. It is unacceptable that the more than 2,500 families, of which approximately 500 are victims of domestic violence, are being left without the Section 8 vouchers they were promised after going through a significant and lengthy application process proving that they meet the stringent criteria required to receive such a limited resource. In the case of victims of domestic violence, these are people who are seeking safe and affordable housing because they are fleeing an abusive partner, which only further complicates this loss of housing assistance.

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) has acknowledged that safe and affordable housing is essential to victims of domestic violence by providing them priority status to receive Section 8 vouchers. NYCHA should continue to adhere to their acknowledgement of the special circumstances faced by victims of domestic violence and work with city, state and federal partners to provide the promised housing assistance.

NYSCADV supports the resolutions recommended by New Destiny Housing Corporation as expressed in their submitted testimony. We commend and thank the Senate for holding a public hearing to learn more about the impact this will have on New York City and hope that this situation is resolved.