

March 2, 2012

Judiciary Committee
Kansas State House

Dear Judiciary Committee Members,

Please consider this letter and testimony as my strong support for Senate Bill 304. It is my belief that the BIP Certification Act is a positive step forward in protecting victims and reducing the cycle of domestic violence. My name is Curt Brungardt, Voss Professor of Leadership Studies at Fort Hays State University. Most importantly however, and the reason why I am here today, is that I co-chair the Batterer Intervention Program advisory Board for Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt.

Sadly, I come to this service work after the death of my step-daughter. On July 3, 2008, Jana Mackey was murdered by her ex-boyfriend in Lawrence. Since that time, her mother and I have been actively engaged in Kansas and nationally to reduce domestic and dating violence. During this time I have had the pleasure of working directly with two attorney generals (Steve Six and Derek Schmidt) to improve batterers intervention programs (BIP) in our state. In addition, I have received BIP training in the states of Colorado, Kansas and Missouri. I have also spent this last year attending and participating in numerous BIP counseling sessions with domestic violence abusers.

In all of this work, I am convinced that certifying quality BIP programs is an absolute must to ensure positive program outcomes. I believe that the certified standards that we have in place here in Kansas is a good step in the right direction to improving these programs. In my opinion, program duration, quality in-take assessment and strong qualifications and experience of BIP facilitators are crucial to overall success. We know from research and experience, that the most serious domestic violence offenders follow a previous pattern of escalating violence. Successful batterer intervention programs can play a sufficient role in reducing the number of re-offenses and the level of violence.

Two years ago, this entire building supported HB 2517, one of the most comprehensive domestic violence laws ever passed in this state. Today, this legislation-Senate Bill 304 enhances and even strengthens that landmark bill. Committee members - the risks are real and they are high! From a father who buried his daughter, let's not make any shortcuts. Accept this legislation as presented.

Now, I would welcome any questions you may have.

Dr. Curt Brungardt