



## Press Release

# Monroe County Democratic Caucus

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## Crucial Legislation Protecting Domestic Violence Victims' Housing Rights Adopted

**Rochester, New York – December 17, 2007:** Crucial legislation protecting the housing rights of victims of domestic or dating violence, authored by **Legislator Carla Palumbo** (D – Rochester), was unanimously adopted into county law at last week's meeting of the Monroe County Legislature. This local law now makes it an "unlawful discriminatory act" for any person who has knowledge or believes someone is a victim of domestic or dating violence to refuse to rent, or continue to rent to that person. Specifically, the law makes it unlawful to:

- 1) To refuse to sell, rent, lease, or to refuse the approval of the sale, rental or lease of such a housing accommodation;
- 2) To refuse to continue to rent or lease or otherwise to deny to or withhold from any person or group of persons such a housing accommodation;
- 3) To alter the terms, conditions or privileges of the sale, rental or lease of any such housing accommodation.

The proposal received broad support from community groups that advocate on behalf of victims. Domestic violence is a crime that continues to be a devastating problem in the United States. In 2005, the U.S. Congress found that domestic or dating violence was a direct cause of homelessness in 44 percent of women in surveyed cities; while across the nation, 92 percent of homeless women have experienced severe physical or sexual abuse at some time in their lives.

"All too often, victims do not report their abusers because they are dependent on them for fundamental necessities, including shelter; making the critical decision to leave far more complicated," stated **Legislator Palumbo**, "I am pleased that this legislation was adopted unanimously by the Legislature, demonstrating our commitment to protect our community from these serious crimes."

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