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Caitlyn's Courage

House Bill 1023 Passes Providing Funding to Address Domestic Violence with Technology
Caitlyn's Courage begins development of GPS monitoring program to prevent victim abuse

Greenville, NC – Yesterday, the North Carolina State Legislature passed a critical bill that allocates federal funding to the Department of Public Safety, Division of Administration. These funds will be used to provide a grant to an Eastern North Carolina non-profit, Caitlyn's Courage, to address domestic violence head-on with technology.

House Bill 1023 earmarks $3.5 million in federal COVID-19 stimulus funds toward the development and implementation of a GPS monitoring program aimed at reducing interaction between domestic violence victims and the accused. The program alerts both parties when they are in close proximity, either by mistake or intentionally. A third-party 24-hour monitoring entity is also alerted and can intervene if necessary.

The on-going COVID-19 pandemic, and subsequent stay-at-home orders, have resulted in a spike in domestic violence cases. As an example, Wilmington reported a 116% jump over the same time period last year.

"North Carolina ranks 4th in the United States for domestic violence crisis calls and the number of those calls has increased with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic," said legislative champions Rep. Perrin Jones, MD, Rep. Kandie Smith, and Sen. Don Davis in a joint statement. **"GPS tracking is a proven technology that increases the effectiveness of restraining orders. This is a significant step toward protecting victims and making our communities safer."**

This program will utilize GPS technology to ensure that potentially harmful or even deadly interaction does not occur. The accused will wear an inconspicuous tracking device that will alert the victim's phone via a mobile app when the two are within a set radius of one another.

"One of the most vulnerable times for domestic violence victims is the pretrial period after the accused has been released from jail and is awaiting trial," Sheriff Paula S. Dance said. **"This program will reduce the risk to the victim during the most vulnerable time."**

Caitlyn's Courage will oversee the development and implementation of the program. The organization was founded in memory of Caitlyn Whitehurst, who was tragically murdered in a domestic violence incident.

"We thank the North Carolina Legislature for passing House Bill 1023 and allocating much-needed funding for this initiative," said Judson Whitehurst, Caitlyn's father and Board Member with Caitlyn's Courage. **"As a State, we must provide victims of domestic violence with resources that ensure protection and safety. As an organization, we are committed to utilizing these funds in the most effective ways possible to develop this important program."**

More than 40 states, including North Carolina, allow for GPS tracking to protect victims of domestic violence. House Bill 1023 passed unanimously in the State Senate 47-0 and 114-0 in the State House.

About Caitlyn's Courage

Caitlyn's Courage was founded in memory of Caitlyn Whitehurst who was a victim of a domestic violence murder-suicide. Caitlyn was a loving daughter, sister, granddaughter, aunt, and friend to many. The Whitehurst family founded the non-profit organization with a goal of fostering and delivering proven vital services to curtail domestic violence in the State of North Carolina.