Caitlyn's Courage

VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

The Honorable Donny Lambeth
N.C. House of Representatives
300 N. Salisbury Street, Rm. 303
Raleigh, NC 27603-5925

Dear Representatives Lambeth:

A little over a year ago, on May 13, 2019, we tragically lost Caitlyn Whitehurst - a loving daughter, sister, granddaughter, aunt, and a friend to many. Caitlyn had a heart of gold that overflowed with love and respect for everyone that she had the pleasure of meeting.

Not a day goes by that we don't think about Caitlyn - the pain and misery that our family has experienced is something that we don't want any family in North Carolina to ever have to go through. Therefore, we established Caitlyn's Courage, a non-profit entity, devoted to fostering and delivering proven vital services to curtail domestic violence (DV) in North Carolina.

Sadly, the State of North Carolina ranks 4th in the United States in DV-related crisis calls. Furthermore, to be honest, this statistic is unacceptable, and more must be done to provide victims of domestic violence the resources that assures protection and safety.

Recognizing that multiple DV non-profits are in the arena of education and how to detect DV, we reached out to multiple officials seeking advise on what recourses are available and proven to improving victim safety, and those officials include, but not limited to: law enforcement officers, judicial officials, health experts, and other DV victim advocate groups.

The feedback from those officials illuminated how the most dangerous time for victims of domestic violence is the pretrial period after their abuser has been charged with the crime and has been released pending trial. Further, the feedback received pointed to establishing a GPS monitoring program, with the intent of quickly alerting a victim if the defendant comes too close.

Earlier this year, legislation was filed in South Carolina, HB 3708, which would require judges to outfit men and women with an ankle monitor or another GPS tracking device in lieu of setting bond, and or, keeping them behind bars. Pursuant to already current North Carolina law, our state is among nearly 40 other states that allow GPS tracking to protect victims of domestic violence. Building upon the South Carolina legislation, Caitlyn's Courage started laying the foundation for leading a similar program here in North Carolina.

To that end, we would be delighted and honored to receive assistance from the North Carolina General Assembly to partner with us in our endeavors of improving DV victims safety, especially considering the uptick in DV cases due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Rep. Lambeth, we thank you for your work on behalf of the citizens of North Carolina, and please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,
Caitlyn's Courage Board of Directors

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