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REPRESENTATIVE SCHAKOWSKY INTRODUCES BILL TO PROVIDE EMERGENCY SHELTERS FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. Expressing deep concern over the lack of adequate emergency shelters for women and children fleeing domestic violence, U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today introduced the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Victims' Housing Act of 1999.

Representative Schakowsky cited statistics that show that 50 percent of all homeless women and children are fleeing domestic violence, and that emergency shelters are unable to meet 32 percent of the requests for shelter by homeless families.

Furthermore, in 1996, according to Illinois' Domestic Violence Services, 7,556 adults and 11,836 children seeking shelter from domestic violence were unable to receive it.

Schakowsky, a member of the House Subcommittee on Housing, said, "Victims of domestic violence are often asked why they don't just leave. The all too frequent reason is there is no safe place to go."

The legislation authorizes increased funding through the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act for five years beginning at \$50 million for fiscal year 2000. Under this legislation, community-based housing organizations would apply to receive funding from the Department of Housing and Urban Development in order to assist victims of domestic violence, stalking, or adult or child sexual assault. Groups would use the funds to provide temporary and transitional housing or financial assistance for rent, security deposit, and first month's rent.

"Domestic violence is inexcusable, but the lack of shelter for women and children fleeing domestic abuse is unacceptable. That is why I urge my colleagues to support the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Victims' Housing Act. It is an important step in our efforts to provide valuable resources and assistance to women and children during their time of need."