

Helping Domestic Violence Victims

Publication -- Child Protection Report -- February 28, 2002

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House Recognizes Need for Help
To Come with Housing Assistance

Agencies seeking to help women and children escape domestic violence could tap into a new pool of \$50 million in grants under a bill reintroduced Feb. 13 by Rep. Jan. Schakowsky (D-Ill.) and a roster of 104 (mostly Democratic) House co-sponsors.

H.R. 3752 would actually fund "transitional housing services" - a halfway step between purely emergency housing and independent living. Women and children trying to escape abuse would not only get shelter, but support services to move toward some degree of self-sufficiency.

Schakowsky says the Bush administration's FY'03 budget proposal is "not only woefully inadequate in terms of transitional housing assistance, it fails to aggressively confront the nation's affordable housing crises." She says her bill will help women who have left abusive partners enter educational programs, learn new job skills and find child care.

Funds Authorized, Not Appropriated

Last year, Congress authorized half the amount in Schakowsky's bill - \$25 million - for transitional housing as part of the Violence Against Women Act reauthorization, an aide to the congresswoman told CPR. But that was only an authorization, and not a decision to actually release the money. So, the funds never materialized.

The congresswoman also has sought the support of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Mel Martinez, who has said he will try to come up some new money for these services, the aide said. The bill has been referred to the House Committee on Financial Services and as yet, has no sponsorship in the Senate.

