

## Press Release

# Report Finds 57% of GLBT Domestic Violence Victims Become Homeless

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### For Immediate Release

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### **Press Conference Announcing Release of a New Report: Shelter/Housing Needs for GLBT Victims of Domestic Violence**

**February 21, 2006; 10:30 AM  
Massachusetts State House, Room 222**

Securing appropriate crisis housing is a challenge for any domestic violence victim, but the situation is especially dire for GLBT victims according to a new report: SHELTER/HOUSING NEEDS FOR GLBT VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, to be released Tuesday February 21<sup>st</sup> by the GLBT Domestic Violence Coalition and Jane Doe Inc., with collaboration and support from the Housing and Homelessness Subcommittee of the Governor's Commission on Sexual and Domestic Violence, Senator Jarrett Barrios's Office, and Representative Liz Malia's Office.

According to the report, "While the characteristics of each abusive relationship are unique, GLBT domestic violence is substantially similar to that in heterosexual relationships. The primary differences

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include abuse related to one's GLBT identity and GLBT victims' negative experience in accessing services, including shelter. ... An overwhelming number of GLBT victims (57%) become homeless due to the abuse, with a large number (18%) reporting that they lose everything."

The report also finds that "due to a variety of considerable barriers, GLBT victims are often unable to access or are denied access to appropriate and significant domestic violence services, including shelter." In the report, Kevin Galipeau, Director of Client Services for the Gay Men's Domestic Violence Project, speaks about the inappropriate crisis housing services currently available. "Every time I have placed a client in the safe home they are stunned by how destitute the apartment is. Even though I warned them repeatedly about the neighborhood, no one quite imagines that it's going to be as bad as it is. Nearly every client I have placed since I started this position in July of this year has been reduced to tears by the reality of the situation: they are homeless, they're scared, they feel unsafe in a safe home, and they are intensely lonely... I have already had two clients who fled dangerous situations to come to the safe home and then leave the next morning because they felt the safe home was not as safe as staying with their abuser. This just happened two days ago, the last client. Both these people went to live in unsafe places, places their abusers knew about, places that they thought were too dangerous for them to go before, but now seem safer than our safe home."

The report is the result of public hearings held at the State House in October 2005. GLBT victims and survivors testified as to the impact of the abuse on their lives, their resulting needs for shelter/housing and their struggles to achieve safety in the current system of services. In addition to documenting the current reality facing GLBT domestic violence victims seeking crisis housing, the report offers specific recommendations to improve the situation.

The press conference will review highlights of the report. Survivors, domestic violence activists, public officials and state legislators will be on hand to celebrate the report's release and answer questions.