



September 21, 2016

## **Domestic Violence and Legal Advocacy Groups Applaud Federal Guidance to Protect Survivors of Domestic Violence**

Empire Justice Center and the New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NYSCADV) applaud new guidance from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on current nuisance ordinance laws. The local laws in question are intended to address repeat nuisance complaints around property, drug, and weapon crimes, but in practice are often used to evict survivors of domestic violence and other crime victims who seek police intervention or emergency assistance. HUD's new guidance clarifies the responsibilities local governments have when enacting nuisance laws, and suggests repealing ordinances that create housing disparities for domestic violence and crime victims. This guidance is an important step towards protecting the right of every person to call 911 for help.

Here in New York State, Empire Justice Center has been working closely with NYSCADV and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) Women's Rights Project for the past several years to pass legislation (A.1322 Lavine/S.4955 Robach) that would address the problem of nuisance ordinances in New York State. We hope that this new federal guidance will help to raise awareness of the problem and thus provide support our efforts here in New York.

We thank Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and Senator Chuck Schumer for their leadership and support in asking HUD for this guidance.

**For more information:**

Amy Schwartz-Wallace, Empire Justice Center

(585) 295-5726

[aschwartz@empirejustice.org](mailto:aschwartz@empirejustice.org)

Saima Anjam, New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NYSCADV)

(518) 482-5465

[sanjam@nyscadv.org](mailto:sanjam@nyscadv.org)

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**About Empire Justice Center:**

*Empire Justice Center is a statewide, multi-issue, multi-strategy, public interest law firm focused on changing the “systems” within which poor and low-income families live. Empire Justice protects and strengthens the legal rights of people in New York State who are poor, disabled or disenfranchised through: systems change advocacy, training and support to other advocates and organizations, and high quality direct civil legal representation. Empire Justice has four offices in Albany, Rochester, Yonkers, White Plains and Central Islip on Long Island. For more information about our work, please visit our website: [www.empirejustice.org](http://www.empirejustice.org).*

**About the New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence:**

*NYSCADV is a statewide membership organization comprised of local domestic violence service providers, allies, and community members who are committed to ending domestic violence through education, advocacy, and social change. Founded in 1978, NYSCADV works to create and support the social change necessary to prevent and confront all forms of domestic violence. As a statewide membership organization we achieve our mission through activism, training, prevention, technical assistance, leadership development, legislative development and advocacy. We promote best practices and broad-based collaboration, integrating anti-oppression principles in all our work. For more information about the coalition, visit [www.nyscadv.org](http://www.nyscadv.org)*

*Please include the statewide sexual and domestic violence hotline number(s) in any related media coverage. The hotline is available 24 hours a day, and is free and confidential. Please assist us in offering the hotline number to the many victims of domestic and sexual violence re-traumatized by media reports and to those individuals currently being victimized who may not know where to turn for help.*

*New York State Sexual & Domestic Violence Hotline:  
1-800-942-6906: English/Spanish/Multi-Language Accessibility  
711: Deaf or Hard of Hearing*