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**GOVERNOR PATRICK ANNOUNCES 'ZERO TOLERANCE' FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN
MASSACHUSETTS**

Governor Highlights more than \$5 million in Prevention Funding and Directs Lt. Governor Murray and the Sexual and Domestic Violence Council to Deliver Recommendations to Implement Across the Commonwealth

BOSTON—Monday, October 1, 2007—Governor Deval Patrick and First Lady Diane Patrick today announced a zero-tolerance policy for domestic violence in Massachusetts, while highlighting more than \$5 million in federal and state funding for prevention programs.

The Governor also directed Lieutenant Governor Tim Murray and the state's Sexual and Domestic Violence Council to explore already successful programs that approach domestic violence as a public and civic issue and to deliver a set of best practice recommendations, addressing both the public health and public safety aspects of domestic violence to be implemented across the Commonwealth. The announcement comes at the start of Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

“By all accounts, domestic violence is on the rise in Massachusetts. We are feeling the impact on families and in social services everywhere,” said Governor Patrick. “We need to step up, working together in state government and with family members, friends and neighbors, to put an end to this tragedy.”

“It is important for us to take note of and honor those who care and advocate for victims and survivors of domestic violence - and not just in October, but every day throughout the year, because they work tirelessly, every day and every night, throughout the year,” said First Lady Diane Patrick. “We must celebrate their accomplishments and do all we can to support their ongoing work.”

In July, the Governor signed a budget with an increase of nearly \$3.6 million for programs that address domestic violence. The state has also recently received several grants to focus on the public safety and public health aspects of domestic violence, including:

- The Executive Office of Public Safety received a U.S. Department of Justice grant for more than \$1.3 million for collaboration between with the Municipal Police Training Committee and Jane Doe Inc. to improve the response of Commonwealth Police Departments to domestic violence and sexual abuse incidents through a new veteran and recruit training programs.
- The state Department of Public Health recently received nearly \$900,000 from the U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women for the Massachusetts Rural Domestic and Sexual Violence Project to provide services to rural children and families affected by domestic and dating violence, and to organize and implement sexual and domestic violence prevention initiatives in five counties in rural Massachusetts over the next two years.
- The state Department of Social Services will use approximately \$500,000 from the fiscal 2008 budget to support strategies that most effectively reach women at imminent risk of serious harm, including homicide. DSS will also direct \$500,000 to emergency housing stabilization funding for quick, flexible cash assistance to prevent families from becoming homeless due to Domestic Violence.

The Governor has asked Lieutenant Governor Tim Murray, Public Safety Secretary Kevin Burke and Health and Human Services Secretary JudyAnn Bigby through the Sexual and Domestic Violence Council to tap successful

approaches from at least two domestic violence programs in Massachusetts – the Close to Home program in Dorchester and the Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center in Newburyport.

The Close to Home program allows neighbors to talk openly about domestic violence and the toll it takes on their community. Organizers are creating a web of prevention and intervention designed by that community to foster neighborhood-wide responsibility to prevent and reduce the impact of domestic violence.

In Newburyport, the Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center has worked with the police, the courts and other partners to form a nationally recognized High Risk Response Team, which is demonstrating significant results.

“If the Commonwealth is truly committed to ending domestic violence, we must turn our knowledge about its pervasiveness, prevalence and impact into action, within our communities,” said Lieutenant Governor Murray, who chairs the Sexual and Domestic Violence Council.

“Everyone has the right to live free from the threat of violence. We will continue to work with our partners to seek a solution to the terrible tragedy that is domestic violence,” said Secretary Burke.

"Domestic violence transcends race, ethnicity, gender, religion, socioeconomic status and sexual orientation," said Secretary Bigby. "The personal and social impacts are severe and far-reaching. Victims can suffer chronic health conditions, physical and emotional injury and, in some tragic cases, death. As we have seen through the work of our agencies and beyond, domestic violence also has a significant impact on children and families."

Governor Patrick noted there are free, confidential services available 24 hours a day, every day at the statewide domestic violence hotline, SafeLink, at 877-785-2020. People may also access www.janedoe.org to locate the nearest domestic violence program.

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