

SHIELD Act Introduced to Protect Confidential Domestic Violence Victim Information.

Last week, Representative Gwen Moore (D-WI) and Rep. Katherine Harris (R-FL) introduced the SHIELD Act (HR 2695) designed to protect confidential information supplied by domestic violence victims receiving services at domestic violence shelters funded by Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

In July, 2004, HUD removed the Domestic Violence Exemption in the Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS), despite acknowledging that providing such information may place domestic violence victims at risk for being identified and located by an abuser. This measure required all domestic violence shelters, transitional housing services, and emergency homeless shelters receiving HUD funding to report victim confidential information, including name and social security number, to a national database.

In October, 2004, HUD clarified the final standards, allowing domestic violence shelters to withhold names and social security numbers, but still requiring shelters to provide each victim's date of birth, zip code, and gender. Under the current standards, programs that refuse to provide this information to the national database risk losing critical HUD funding.

The SHIELD Act would exempt the personal information of domestic violence victims from being inputted into HMIS. The Act requires victims to sign a written informed consent before their personal data is submitted to the national database. If victims elect not to sign a consent form, their personal information cannot be submitted to the national database. Personally identifying information includes first and last name; home or other physical address; email address or other online contact; telephone number; a social security number; IP address; persistent identifier; or any other information including grade point average, date of birth, academic or occupational interests, athletic or extracurricular interests, racial or ethnic background, or religious information that would serve to identify the individual. Instead, shelters will provide non-personally identifying information to comply with the HMIS data collection requirements.

NCADV encourages you to contact your Representative and ask them to protect victims of domestic violence by co-sponsoring the SHIELD Act. You may contact your Representative by calling the Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121, or by visiting www.house.gov. If your Representative is on the House Financial Services Committee, your call is particularly important ([click here for a list of committee members](#)).