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Temporary Assistance for Domestic Crisis

P.O. Box 43264
Las Vegas, NV 89116

Mary Terzian
Crisis Counselor/Advocate
Hotline: 646-4981 • Fax: 455-7243
1-800-486-7282

"Domestic Violence Experts for over 20 Years"

102 ASSEMBLY JUDICIARY

DATE: 5/1/03 ROOM: 3138 EXHIBIT J

SUBMITTED BY: Mary Terzian

My name is Mary Terzian and I am a client advocate at Safe Nest. Many times I have gone to court with a victim, and the abuser, who has had emotional control over her for many years will try to intimidate her or alter her behavior. He will glare at her to keep her quiet or cry and look passively at her to make her feel guilty. As an advocate I can point out those behaviors and sometimes all the victim needs is someone on her side to give her the strength to advocate for herself.

As an example, I went to divorce court with a woman who had been severely battered for over 10 years. The batterer's attorney asked for a closed hearing and I was asked to leave the courtroom. The judge set up temporary custody and visitation. At the time, she was living in a transitional housing apartment for battered women. The judge ordered that the abuser could pick the children up that night at her apartment. That night he battered her and she lost her housing because he knew where it was. If I had been allowed to remain in the courtroom I would have been able to point out how dangerous it was for the abuser to pick the children up at her apartment, and maybe she would not have been battered and lost her housing.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my testimony.

J 2012