

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Wednesday, September 9, 2015
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FUNKE, DOORLEY ANNOUNCE PUSH TO ROOT-OUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN MONROE COUNTY

Funding delivered by Funke will help District Attorney's Office expand its investigation and coordination of domestic violence cases

Senator **Rich Funke** and District Attorney **Sandra Doorley** today announced a new effort to crack-down on domestic violence in Monroe County through increased investigation and case coordination. Supported by State funding delivered by **Funke**, the Monroe County District Attorney's Office – Domestic Violence Bureau will expand its pursuit of evidence-based prosecutions against domestic abusers, while providing additional support to victims.

“When we think about domestic violence, too often we see it as someone else's challenge. Sadly, we know this is happening here and the statistics say it's likely impacting someone we know,” said **Funke**. *“I'm proud this effort will crack-down on domestic violence by rooting-out the abusers who commit these crimes in the first place, while better supporting victims as well. Thank you to D.A. Doorley for her partnership and for the work she and her team put into prosecuting abusers to the fullest extent of the law every day.”*

Following a \$50,000 appropriation secured by **Funke**, the Monroe County District Attorney's Office will hire a specialized Coordinator whose services would be specifically dedicated to domestic violence cases. The new effort will allow the Domestic Violence Bureau to strengthen relationships with victims, collect additional evidence following allegations, and allow for continued prosecution even in the event that a victim is unable or unwilling to cooperate with law enforcement.

“The Domestic Violence Coordinator will be instrumental in assisting victims of domestic violence in their efforts to heal and in providing our office with the necessary support to secure convictions in some incredibly difficult cases. Victims of domestic violence are often reluctant to press charges as they fear the far reaching consequences of such a decision. Our Domestic Violence Coordinator will insure that victims are well informed, are comfortable throughout the court process and are provided with the sometimes necessary protections available in this community from agencies like Willow and area law enforcement,” said **Doorley**. *“We are grateful for Senator Funke's support and leadership in this area. He clearly understands the challenges we face in safeguarding victims of domestic violence, while pursuing the prosecution of their perpetrators. This new position will serve to strengthen the already strong partnership we share with Willow and other community organizations which provide support to victims and their families.”*

Domestic violence cases can be some of the most difficult to prosecute due to the nature of the relationship between victim and offender. Some victims may feel they are betraying the trust of their abusers by cooperating with law enforcement during the investigation and prosecution of the abuse. Abusers can also intimidate or threaten victims into becoming uncooperative with police and prosecutors, leading to missed court proceedings or testimony. However, with a specialized coordinator active within the Domestic Violence Bureau, the Monroe County District Attorney's Office will now be able to move forward with the prosecution of domestic violence abuse allegations, with or without a cooperating victim.

*"We are thrilled with the news of these much needed resources to help victims of domestic violence in our community," said **Jaime Saunders**, President & CEO of Willow Domestic Violence Center. "Domestic violence cases are often complex, incredibly personal and high risk. The addition of a designated person at the DA's office who will work closely and stay in touch with victims through the legal process, will add a much needed piece to our web of community support to stop this terrible and preventable crime. The more we can support victims the more we can hold perpetrators accountable, prevent future abuse, and keep our families safe."*

According to the latest Willow Center Domestic Violence Report Card, Monroe County's rates of domestic violence are nearly twice the statewide rate; over 6,000 domestic violence incidents are reported in Monroe County annually; and over 30,000 calls are made to 9-1-1 for domestic violence related incidents in Monroe County each year.

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