

## House Republican Press Release

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### House Okays Legislation to Protect Family Violence Victims



#### *'Jen's Law' Heads to State Senate for Final Legislative Approval*

Legislation that would allow family violence victims who fear for their safety to offer court testimony via teleconference rather than being forced to appear in person was approved unanimously by the state House of Representatives.

Co-sponsored by state Representative Marilyn Giuliano, the legislation stemmed from a case of an abused wife, Jennifer Magnano of Terryville, Connecticut, who was killed by her abusive husband.

Mrs. Magnano had been forced by a court order to return to Connecticut to testify in person in her divorce and child custody battle with her husband.

"I'm delighted that Jen's Law not only passed the House, but passed unanimously," said Representative Giuliano, R-23rd District. "This vote demonstrates the strong support this legislation enjoys in the General Assembly – and it is good news for women in abusive relationships who are concerned about being assaulted or killed when they appear in court to testify in family violence cases. It's my hope that the state Senate approves it just as decisively as we did."

The legislation (House Bill 5875), which was sent to the state Senate for final legislative approval, stemmed from the August 2007 murder of Jennifer Magnano of Terryville, who had fled the town on April 14, 2007, with her son and two daughters to escape an abusive relationship with her husband, Scott Magnano.

"If this legislation passes the Senate and Governor Rell signs it into law, it will give women in abusive relationships the protection they need to avoid potentially fatal encounters with their husbands or former boyfriends in divorce and child custody or support cases," said Representative Giuliano.

"This measure is referred to as 'Jen's Law' - as her family, in-laws, and friends had hoped it would be," Representative Giuliano said, "It's my hope that other states will see the wisdom of this legislation and use it as a model for their own laws. It would be a fitting tribute to a woman who cared so much for the safety of her children, that she

returned to Connecticut to stand up for them in court, knowing full well that she was risking her life.”

*Rep. Giuliano serves the 23<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District of Old Lyme, Lyme, Old Saybrook and Westbrook in the state House of Representatives.*