



National Coalition for Men

Committed to ending sex discrimination since 1977

932 C Street Suite B, San Diego, CA 92101 * 619-231-1909 * ncfm.org

Harry Crouch
President

November 29, 2008

Carol Tantau
Chairman, City of Los Angeles Domestic Violence Task Force
Community Development Department
1200 West 7th Street, 6th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Ms. Tantau,

The National Coalition for Men (formerly National Coalition of Free Men - "NCFM") is the oldest and largest men's issues organization in the United States. We are dedicated to helping men, their families, children, and the women who love them, and particularly the removal of harmful gender based stereotypes. We abhor domestic violence (DV) and anything that gets in the way of solving it, including gender based politics.

I want to share with you my disappointment over an incident at the November 10, 2008, Los Angeles Domestic Violence Task Force meeting (LADVTF).

At that meeting our Executive Vice President, Don Saxton, brought two male DV survivors as well as Marc Angelucci, the prevailing attorney in the Woods v. Shewry case which held that denying state-funded services to male victims is unconstitutional. As I understand it, the incident began when the first male DV survivor spoke about his experience of being denied services. At one point, when he mentioned the name of a certain DV expert (Professor Linda Mills of New York University) two LADVTF members began snickering and laughing openly and overtly. That immediately triggered open hostilities and even shamed another DV survivor from speaking.

As you know, that kind of disrespect is a signature of power and control. As I understand it, you, as Chairperson, did nothing to correct the situation or admonish those who snickered. That is especially appalling considering the speakers are DV survivors at a meeting that was dedicated to stopping DV.

Further, reoccurring incidents of this type may explain the predominance of 26 women on a LADVTF, all of whom reportedly lacked appropriate sensitivity.

**NCFM for years did business as the National Coalition of Free Men (NCFM).
NCFM is now doing business as the National Coalition for Men – since 2008**



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The anti-male hostility these men were subjected to is indicative of the kind of anti-male hostility men in Los Angeles have been subjected to for years from the DV industry. The hostility was so extreme that Patricia Overberg of Valley Oasis had to file a complaint with the L.A. County Board of Supervisors because other shelter directors abused her for helping male victims.

We urge you to re-focus the Task Force on the matter at hand. We are willing to aid in amending the failure of the DV effort in Los Angeles, but we will not condone disrespect to victims regardless of gender or support extremism of any kind, particularly that which has caused the failure to address problems associated with DV in their totality and arguably make matters substantially worse.

We hope to hear back from you on this matter and engage in dialogue.

Sincerely,

Harry Crouch,
President NCFM

Cc:

Nadine Shimoji, Project Coordinator City of Los Angeles Domestic Violence Task Force
Community Development Department

Jack Weiss
Chair - Public Safety

Board of Supervisors and City Council Members

Others