



115TH INDIANA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATOR CONNIE SIPES

SENATE DISTRICT 46

NEWS RELEASE

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Sipes recognized for work to empower victims of domestic violence 2007 legislation changed Indiana's next of kin privileges in domestic violence deaths

INDIANAPOLIS – State Senator Connie Sipes (D-New Albany) was recognized today by the Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV) for her legislative work to empower victims of domestic violence. Sipes received the first-ever Empowerment through Legislative Leadership Award, presented in commemoration of Domestic Violence Awareness Month today at a Statehouse ceremony.

"I am humbled by this award and hope that the work of each of us brings more awareness to the threat of domestic violence in our communities," Sipes said.

The honor is in recognition of the senator's successful work during the 2007 legislative session in passing Senate Enrolled Act 271, a new law that removes next of kin privileges from spouses or guardians who a coroner and law enforcement suspect may have committed murder, voluntary manslaughter, or another criminal act resulting in the death of the decedent. The new law, sponsored by Representative Linda Lawson (D-Hammond) and co-sponsored by Representative Steve Stemler (D-Jeffersonville) in the Indiana House, went into effect July 1 of this year.

"I would like to share this recognition with Linda Young, who truly deserves our praise," Sipes said. "Her work to help get this bill through the process is an example of how one citizen can transform public policy."

Linda Young is the mother of Christi Melcher, a pregnant Jeffersonville woman who was killed by her husband in 2005. Despite the husband's confession, the family was still required to gain permission from him to bury their family member. Sipes said the Melcher case inspired the legislation.

According to the ICADV, 76 deaths were attributed to domestic violence in the state between July 1, 2006 and June 30, 2007.

The ICADV is committed to the elimination of domestic abuse through providing public awareness and education, advocating for systemic and societal change, influencing public policy and allocation of resources, educating and strengthening Coalition members and promoting the availability of comprehensive services.

For more information on Senator Sipes, her legislative agenda or other State Senate business call 1-800-382-9467 or visit www.senatedemocrats.in.gov.

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