

The Connecticut General Assembly

House Democrats



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Senate President Looney and Speaker Sharkey Appoint Leaders of Family Violence Task Force

Senate President Martin M. Looney (D-New Haven) and Speaker of the House Brendan Sharkey (D-Hamden) today announced their selections to the Task Force to Study the State-Wide Response to Family Violence.

Sen. Looney has named Karen Jarmoc, president and CEO of the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV), to co-chair the task force. CCADV is a membership organization of Connecticut's 18 domestic violence service agencies that provide critical support to victims including counseling, support groups, emergency shelter, court advocacy, safety planning and lethality assessment, among other services.

"Family violence is a plague, and in Connecticut we have witnessed its deadly and heart-wrenching results," said Sen. Looney. "This task force will examine ways for state agencies to better coordinate their responses. I am confident that Ms. Jarmoc's professional and legislative experience will be a true asset as she helps lead this task force."

Speaker Sharkey has named Garry Lapidus, director of the Injury Prevention Center at Connecticut Children's Medical Center and Hartford Hospital and Associate Professor of Pediatrics & Public Health, University of Connecticut School of Medicine to co-chair the task force. Lapidus is a national leader in injury prevention research, education and training, as well as community-based programs and policy.

"As a society, we face an ongoing challenge to better address and reduce the tragic incidence of family violence," Speaker Sharkey said. "Mr. Lapidus brings the necessary experience and knowledge that can make a real difference for families throughout our state, and I expect the work of this important task force to become a priority in the next legislative session."

“This task force offers an important opportunity for us to engage in valuable dialogue around systems change to improve policy and practice for children impacted by family violence,” said Jarmoc. “We know that nearly 1,200 children are residing in domestic violence shelters each year, with thousands more being served in community settings, which exemplifies the true need for a comprehensive, coordinated response to this issue.” -more- “I look forward to working with the Family Violence Task Force members as we seek to better understand and develop recommendations to address this frequent and costly public health problem,” said Lapidus.

As part of the panel’s mandate, the leaders asked that the co-chairs to consider the circumstances leading to the deaths of Aaden Moreno of Middletown and Zaniyah Calloway of Bristol.

Special Act 15-10, An Act Establishing a Task Force to Study the State-Wide Response to Family Violence was a top priority of the Committee on Children during the legislative session. State Senator Danté Bartolomeo (D-Meriden) and State Representative Diana Urban (D-Stonington) serve as co-chairs of that committee and were instrumental to its passage.

“The recent tragedy in Middletown has served as a painful reminder of the terrible consequences of family violence,” said Sen. Bartolomeo (D-Meriden), Senate Chair of the Committee on Children. “Connecticut needs to develop a comprehensive policy to confront the problem of domestic violence in our state. Karen Jarmoc and Garry Lapidus are perfect people to lead this effort and I look forward to acting upon their recommendations in the next legislative session.”

“I want to thank both Speaker Sharkey and Senate President Looney for appointing the co-chairs of this task force so quickly because our children and families simply cannot wait. The recent tragic cases of family violence in Bristol and Middletown highlight the need for a new state-wide policy model to better prevent and respond to family violence. I am confident that both Karen Jarmoc and Garry Lapidus have the experience, and passion necessary to lead this task force and I look forward to working with them on behalf of Connecticut’s children,” said Rep. Urban.

The task force’s study shall include, but not be limited to, an examination of existing policies and procedures used by the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, health care professionals, law enforcement, guardians ad litem, attorneys for minor children and the Judicial Branch for minors who are exposed to family violence.

Additionally, the task force is charged with the development of a state-wide model policy for use by:

- The Department of Children and Families, including organizations with which it contracts services;
- The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, including organizations with which it contracts services;
- health care professionals;
- guardians ad litem;

- attorneys for minor children;
- law enforcement; and
- the Judicial Branch, when responding to minors who are exposed to family violence.