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**Subject:** Domestic Violence Shelter Visit (Jeb Bush)  
**Location:** Sistercare, 721 Raleigh Street, West Columbia, S.C.  
**When:** 3/17/2015 2:00:00 PM - 2:45:00 PM

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Advance: Bridget Wyant  
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### **Shelter Visit & Press Conference**

**Date** – Tuesday, March 17, 2015

**Time** – 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.:

- Shelter Visit – 2:00 – 2:45 p.m.
- Press Conference – Advise for 3:00 p.m.

**Locations** – Approx. 4-6 minutes apart in drive time:

- Shelter Visit – Sistercare shelter and children’s counseling center in Lexington County. **This is a confidential address and a closed event – DO NOT SEND TO PRESS:**  
721 Raleigh Street; West Columbia, SC 29169
- Press Conference – Sistercare offices at the Cayce Municipal Conference Center (brick two-story building with black shutters on a hill behind the Cayce Public Safety Complex):  
1820 Morlaine Road; Cayce, SC 29033

**Primary Staff** – Becca

**Security Detail** – Female agents are requested out of concern for the shelter residents’ privacy.

**Purpose** – To join Governor Bush and Mrs. Bush on a visit to a Midlands area domestic violence shelter to see first-hand the services and resources available to victims and their children and to experience a “day in the life” of a shelter resident. Following , to hold a press conference to share their experiences with the public and to continue advocating for the issue of domestic violence.

Note – The shelter visit comes in the context of the ongoing work being done by Governor Haley’s Domestic Violence Task Force.

**Itinerary for Shelter Visit (CLOSED PRESS)** – Nancy Barton, Executive Director of Sistercare, will serve as host and guide.

- 15 minutes – Facility Tour of shelter and children’s counseling center (privacy concern: only Governor Haley and Mrs. Bush will be allowed upstairs to see the dormitory rooms; the rest of the group and all men must stay downstairs);
- 15 minutes – Meeting with Sistercare leadership (“A Day in the Life of a Shelter Resident” – from calling into the crisis line to leaving the shelter);
- 15 minutes – Survivor’s Testimony and Discussion – **CONFIDENTIAL VICTIM NAME:** Leela Volaty former shelter resident and now successful state employee; She will tell her story and explain which services made a difference in her life.

**Speakers at Press Conference (questions from the press following):** Mrs. Bush will stand with Governor Bush but has not planned to make formal comments. Sistercare board members (up to 16) could be invited to stand behind the Governors.

- Executive Director of Sistercare, Nancy Barton, will make brief welcoming remarks;
- Governor Haley will speak;
- Governor Bush will speak;
- Governor Haley will open it up to questions.

### **Talking Points for NH's Remarks:**

Thank you, Nancy, for having us with you this afternoon. Sistercare is a beacon of light, here, in the Midlands, offering second chances to so many victims and their children who need help and need hope. What you and your colleagues do is God's work, and we are so proud of what you do.

I am joined here today by good friends, Governor Jeb Bush and his wife, Columba, who continue to be lifelong advocates for domestic violence in their home state.

When I knew that Governor Bush and Mrs. Bush would be in town, it just made sense for them to join me today. During his administration, Governor Bush and Mrs. Bush did so much to support domestic violence victims and services, and so it's a passion we both share.

I've sought advice from Governor Bush in the past, and this is no different. They made real changes in Florida, and while I'm trying to make real changes in South Carolina, I thought it was the perfect opportunity to get together and see what I could learn from those who have fought this fight and gotten real results for the people of Florida.

I can't tell you how tremendous it was for me to visit Sistercare today – to have the opportunity to understand what “a day in the life of a shelter resident” looks like. To walk in the shoes of a victim – as best we can – from the initial call for help to intake to working through it and getting out and back on your feet. This experience has opened my eyes even more to the work we have to do in South Carolina.

The Task Force I am chairing has a long road ahead, but we are taking on the challenge bit by bit. As my Task Force members are splitting up into working groups to collect data and information, we're discovering what we know – but more importantly – we're discovering what we don't know.

As chair, I wanted that experience of my own. As my members are out there getting information, I wanted to do that in my own way. So, I went straight to the ground floor to validate what I knew – but more importantly – to learn what I didn't, which is why I called Sistercare.

What I learned today... **[INCLUDE OBSERVATIONS FROM THE SHELTER VISIT HERE]**

With that, I'll turn it over to Governor Bush.

### **Background Information**

#### **Information about the Bush's on Domestic Violence:**

During his administration in Florida, Governor Bush instituted a broad front in the war on domestic violence. Examples of his results include:

- Made domestic violence shelters a priority by increasing funding by 66%, which helped renovate 41 shelters in Florida, many of which were in a deplorable state with substandard living conditions – reducing the turn-away list by 57% during his tenure.
- Signed into law “The Family Protection Act” of 2001, which increased criminal penalties for domestic violence offenders.
- Unveiled the new “Violence Free Florida!” public awareness campaign to increase the safety of families and foster public-private partnerships for great community involvement.

But Governor Bush certainly didn't do it on his own. Every step of the way, he had the backing of his wife, Former First Lady Columba Bush.

- As First Lady, Mrs. Bush took on efforts, opening her home at the Governor's Mansion and traveling the state to bring real results to the domestic victims in Florida.
- Mrs. Bush has even traveled to Alabama to advise then-First Lady Dianne Bentley and has also done work in Mexico to help transform policies related to domestic violence, and we are so fortunate to have her, here, in South Carolina to give us her advice and wisdom.
- Some of her activities include:
  - Founding and current board member of the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence Foundation (FCDAV Foundation), which is FL's first statewide nonprofit focused on building private endowments for life-saving services so they are no longer dependent just on government resources.
  - Created PSAs in English and Spanish for domestic violence causing a 155% increase in the calls for help.
  - Conducted listening tours throughout FL, visiting 34 shelters in FL.
  - Hosted the first summit on domestic violence and substance abuse to discuss the interconnection between those issues.
  - Continues to host the annual FCADV Foundation "Door to Hope" event to raise money for the domestic violence foundation.

### **Update on Task Force:**

The three divisions have each held one or two meetings, and their working groups have all held their first meetings. I'm told each meeting has been about two hours long with great, productive discussions, and the members are enthusiastic and passionate about taking on this challenge.

We're in Phase I, which is collecting information and data – to tackle any problem, you first have to know where you are to know where you're going, so this is an incredible learning opportunity.

Our next full Task Force meeting is in May, and will receive reports on county-by-county data then.

### **Detailed Division Updates:**

- From the criminal justice side, my members are discovering that there isn't a lot of uniformity in how we input and track data amongst governmental entities – such as between local law enforcement agencies, state agencies, prosecutors, and courts. Because of that, it's a problem on the front end for those in the field who need to get information, and it's also a problem on the backend for researchers to track and analyze data.
- From the services side, those members have also discovered that there are large gaps in data for certain populations, but being able to track victims will help them be able to identify patterns of behavior to prevent future occurrences.
- From the community outreach and education side, my members are talking about bringing awareness to this issue at the youngest possible age addressing, which they believe is likely to create the most social change.

### **Information about Sistercare:**

- Sistercare provides shelter to 482 adults and children in Richland and Lexington Counties with an average length of stay at 35 days.
- Sistercare serves 6,947 adults and children in all types of programs.
- Sistercare, Inc. was established in 1981 by concerned citizens in Columbia, including the Junior League, YWCA, and United Way; it is one of approx. 23 domestic violence organizations in SC.
- Sistercare is an independent organization funded by the Junior League, United Way, and the SC Dept. of Social Services (DSS) along with donations from churches and other civic organizations.

Call to Action: Sistercare is overwhelmed with volunteer services and donated goods. The only items that Sistercare would like to receive are USED CELL PHONES.

### **Information about the CDV Bills (S.3, H.3433):**

The Senate and House CDV bills make some good improvements to current law in three key areas:

- Redefines the crimes according to the severity of the crime, rather than defining the crimes sequentially. Current law mainly takes into account only the number prior convictions – whether it's a 1st, 2nd, or 3rd offense, regardless of the severity of violence. The bills take into account other, aggravating factors, such as whether a deadly weapon was used, children were present, women victims were pregnant, robbery or kidnapping were involved, or the offenders blocked victims' access to phones to dial 911 – in addition to the number of prior convictions and whether orders of protection were violated.

*The law would be smarter.*

- Enhances penalties for DV crimes. For example, the bills increase the penalty for DVHAN (the most serious CDV offense) from 10 years max imprisonment to 20 years max, and penalties for lesser offenses are increased as well.

*The law would be stronger.*

- Provides more tools for victims and prosecutors. For example, the Senate bill creates new civil permanent orders of protection and new civil emergency orders of protection. The House bill makes it easier for prosecutors to proceed with a trial if a victim backs out, and it requires judges to look at criminal history and the incident report during a bond hearing.

*The law would be more helpful.*

**Information about Gun Bans:**

The Senate bill appears to be much stronger than the House bill:

<b>SENATE BILL, S.3</b>	<b>HOUSE BILL, H.3433</b>
Bans possession of a firearm for a person who has been: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convicted of DVHAN, 1<sup>st</sup> Degree CDV, or 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree CDV;</li> <li>• Convicted of 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree CDV and the judge ordered the ban at sentencing (magistrates);</li> <li>• Convicted of DVHAN or CDV in another state;</li> <li>• Subject to an Order of Protection under Chapter 4, Title 20 (domestic abuse);</li> <li>• Subject to an Order of Protection for domestic abuse in other state.</li> </ul> Penalty – Felony (5 years; \$500-\$1k) Duration of Ban after Completion of Sentence (punitive) – <b>10 years</b> for DVHAN, 1 <sup>st</sup> Degree CDV, or 2 <sup>nd</sup> Degree CDV; and <b>5 years</b> for 3 <sup>rd</sup> Degree CDV and judge ordered ban at sentencing.	Authorizes judges to ban possession of firearms as a condition of bond for charges of DVHAN.

Note on the FL Law – Florida law prohibits convicted CDV offenders, including CDV misdemeanors, from possessing firearms. Florida also has provisions banning guns from those for whom an order of protection is granted. Similar to federal law, Florida also prohibits anyone convicted of a felony from possessing a firearm.

Like FL's law, the Senate bill makes it possible to prohibit firearms for all CDV offenders, including at the misdemeanor level. The Senate's provision is modeled after Louisiana's law, so it's structured differently than FL's.

**Current Information on Domestic Violence in South Carolina:**

- National Ranking – SC was ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> highest in the nation for the rate of women killed by men in 2014. SC has ranked in the Top Ten of states for the rate of women killed by men in the past twelve years according to the Violence Policy Center.
- Press & Public Discourse – The *Post & Courier* ran a seven-part series in early fall of 2014 highlighting SC's ranking and problems within state processes, which is credited to have built great momentum in the public eye for domestic violence reform. The entire series can be viewed here: <http://www.postandcourier.com/tilldeath/title.html>

- Legislative Action – In the fall of 2014, the House created an ad hoc study committee for domestic violence reform, and the Senate included domestic violence at the top of its agenda as well. In late February, the Senate bill (S.3) passed the Senate 38-3 with a strong gun ban provision for convicted 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and CDVHAN offenders, and the bill is now pending in House Judiciary. The House bill, H.3433 includes a weaker gun ban and is still in subcommittee. Although the bills are different, it is general agreement that both bills make three important improvements to current law: (1) redefines CDV crimes according to the severity of the crime (i.e. adds aggravating factors); (2) enhances penalties for CDV crimes (including a gun ban provision); and (3) provides more tools for victims and prosecutors (e.g. orders of protection).
- Gubernatorial Action:
  - In December of 2014, Governor Haley hosted a forum with special guest Kit Gruelle, a national battered women’s advocate from NC who was featured in the award-winning HBO documentary, *Private Violence*, to begin a statewide discussion on the culture of domestic violence in SC.
  - On January 14, 2014, Governor Haley touched on domestic violence during her Inaugural speech regarding part of her dream for SC: “...In that South Carolina, mothers and daughters, sisters and wives, go to bed each night knowing that they are safe, that they are loved and supported, that their community is with them...”
  - On January 28, 2015, Governor Haley held a press conference and issued Executive Order 2015-04, establishing the Domestic Violence Task Force for the purpose of addressing cultural issues in SC. The Governor serves as Chair of the Task Force, which has been divided into three divisions chaired by Cabinet directors: Criminal Justice; Victim and Offender Services; and Community Awareness, Education, and Outreach. The Task Force is conducting will expire at the end of 2015. There are over 40 member entities represented on the Task Force from the municipal, county, and state levels and from non-profit and faith-based communities.
  - On February 10, 2015, Governor Haley chaired the first Task Force meeting. The Task Force is conducting its work in four phases, each phase lasting 3-4 months: collecting data and information; identifying problems and proposing solutions; implementing approved proposals, where possible; and assessing short- and long-term goals.
  - As of mid-March, the three divisions have held their first meetings and are dividing up into working groups to collect data and information. The next full Task Force meeting is scheduled for May when the Governor will receive reports of data and information from the three divisions.

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### **Columba Bush’s Op-Ed (11/14/14)**

Domestic violence continues to be one of the most critical issues impacting Florida’s families and children. You may be surprised to learn that children represent nearly fifty percent of the residents in emergency shelter at any given time. In fact, during the 2013/14 Fiscal Year, Florida’s 42 certified domestic violence centers provided emergency shelter to 15,611 individuals, 7,219 were children.

Florida’s 42 certified domestic violence centers are the primary lifeline for domestic violence victims and their children. Through my work with the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence (FCADV), I have learned that our domestic violence centers employ a comprehensive and seamless approach to providing services to domestic violence survivors and their children.

In an effort to increase private revenue for our state’s domestic violence centers, I became a founding board member of the FCADV Foundation, whose goal is to create a statewide, private revenue stream to ensure that life-saving services for domestic violence victims and their children are less dependent on government resources. On October 25, Jeb and I hosted the third annual “*Door to Hope*” fundraising event that benefits the Foundation. Thanks to the generosity of many, the event generated in excess of \$400,000 net revenue, with a three year total of approximately 1 million dollars.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and purple is designated as the campaign’s signature

color. It is the month we coordinate our efforts to create a “top of mind awareness” of the impact that domestic violence has in our state, our communities, and our families. Perhaps you noticed purple bows hanging on a friend’s front door or received an invitation to a fundraising event for your local domestic violence center. Perhaps you turned on your television to see a Public Service Announcement that displayed the Statewide Domestic Violence Hotline number. And you most likely read guest columns or opinion editorials written by celebrities, athletes, elected officials, coaches, domestic violence centers, and even this year’s Miss America Kira Kazantsev. There was an abundance of activities and articles related to domestic violence last month and I sincerely thank each person that lent his or her voice to this critical issue.

Last year, I challenged every Floridian to take one step toward preventing domestic violence during each week in October. I received hundreds of responses from moms, dads, and teens. One of my favorite responses was from a sixteen-year-old girl named Angela whose mother told her that to earn her allowance she would be required to watch a two hour educational video on how to identify the signs of an unhealthy relationship, and then conduct an educational presentation to her family on what she learned. A single father of three sons, ages 12-17 responded that each week at dinner he discussed the importance of respecting girls and treating them appropriately. Countless others donated food, clothes, time, and money to their local domestic violence shelters. Your actions motivate and inspire me!

During the summer, I overheard an advocate working at one of our shelters say “domestic violence happens every day, every week, and every month.” Her words resonated with me and helped direct the content and the timing of this year’s opinion editorial. Therefore, I am challenging each of us to commit to one thing each month to help educate our communities and families. You can share with your teenagers about how to approach friends who are in unhealthy relationships. Set aside time and talk with your boys about how to respectfully treat girls. Just commit to one action step for the next twelve months. Please email me your action steps throughout the year at [Columba.Bush@fcadvfoundation.org](mailto:Columba.Bush@fcadvfoundation.org). I am humbled to work side by side with each of you to end this crime that permeates our communities.

For additional information about the FCADV Foundation, [www.fcadv.org/foundation](http://www.fcadv.org/foundation)

Columba Bush

Former First Lady of Florida, 1999-2007

Founding Board Member of the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence Foundation, Inc.