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November 5, 2007

Radio-Frequency Identification Document Advisory Panel
California Research Bureau
P.O. Box 942837
Sacramento, California 94237-0001

Dear Committee Members:

I am submitting my written comments to the hearing held on October 31, 2007 on RFID technology. CPEDV is a statewide, membership-based coalition of 195 domestic violence service providers and other supporters, who offer a united voice on legislation and budgetary initiatives affecting victims of domestic violence and their children. Over the course of our 25-year history, we have worked with lawmakers and our allied partners to enact over 100 statutes on these issues.

CPEDV would like to comment on the introduction of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology, which allows for the remote transmission or the remote reading of personal information stored in drivers' licenses or other identification cards. Currently, there are no security systems in place to prevent computer hackers from compromising this sensitive technology. The domestic violence community is incredibly concerned about the use of this technology and the impact it will have on domestic violence survivors and their children. From the domestic violence perspective, RFID technology poses an incredible threat to the safety of domestic violence victims.

We are particularly concerned that batterers may be able to use RFID technology to gain access to personal information about the identity and location of domestic violence victims. The Legislature enacted the existing "Safe at Home" program to prohibit state and local agencies from revealing a victim's personal information. We are concerned there are insufficient protections in place to prevent batterers from circumventing the law and acquiring this information using RFIDs.

We are also concerned about the impact this technology will have on domestic violence shelters. As you may be aware, all domestic violence shelters are confidential locations. The majority of shelters in California provide direct services to victims and their families at these confidential locations. If a batterer were to have access to RFID technology, a batterer could find the victim and the shelter's location, not only compromising the safety and integrity of the victim, but also the safety and integrity of all the shelter's residents and workers.

For over thirty years, the domestic violence movement has fought to ensure that victims and their children have a safe place to retreat when fleeing from domestic violence. RFID technology, without the appropriate safeguards, could endanger hundreds of thousands victims

and their children. We urge the committee to consider the needs of domestic violence victims and their families and see it that appropriate safeguards are in place before RFID technology is implemented.

If you have any questions, please call me directly at 916.444.7163, ext. 103.

Sincerely,

Jeannette Zanipatin, J.D.,
Policy Director