Give 'em shelters

Hills lawyer heads up task force

Women and men who have been victims of domestic abuse are apeaking out — identifying themselves openly as individuals who have suffered from physical attacks by their spouses or partners.

ners.
One such occasion was last week's open meeting with a Michigan task force panel on domestic violence at the Oakland County Commissioners Auditorium in igan task force panel on domestic violence at the Oakland County Commissioners Auditorium in Pontiac. Panel members heard how many women and one man have suffered, in a speaking time limited to three minutes. Some described how community services, such as hospitals, police and courts, had often failed to give them the help they needed. Also in the crowd of about 100 were representatives of groups that have been able to help, such as the HAVEN, a shelter for battered women, in Pontiac. But that shelter is full, director Hedy Nuriel told the audience.

Typically, shelters are full, and some women, who desperately need an immediate safe haven, have to be turned away.

One goal of the task force is to

have more shelters available throughout the state. Farmington Hills lawyer Henry Beakin, whom Gov. John Engler appointed to head the teak force, arptined that the appreach to eliminating domestic violence is to come up with a statewide plan that alroamunities will follow. Police and courts will have specific guidelines to direct them in handling physical abuse cases. There won't be as much lowery for the individual police officer or judge to decide just what to de about each situation.

Some women who addressed the task force panel mentioned how difficult it was for them to reveal themselves as domestic violence victims. It took guts to attend the meeting and talk about what had happened to them, they said.

The horror stories abounded,

even though there is now a stalk-ing law on the books, some violent men found a way around the law to continue their attacks. The task force hopes to make present laws work better, with specific statewide methods of en-forcement, and to come up with more laws as needed to address the issue directly.

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Baskin and the other task force members, lawyer Wendy Potts of Birmingham and lawyer Jeffrey Collins of Detroit, will give Gov. Engler recommendations for legislation involving family protection orders. Testimony from the open meeting will be attached to the report.

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The horror stories abounded, such as women who had been beaten, called the police to their homes and somehow found themselves being considered as the cause of the problem instead of their abusive apouses.

Even when women had gotten court injunction to prevent their partners from seeing them, and Representatives from comm

ally killed by her partner. Every-where they had turned, they said, they failed to get the help they needed.

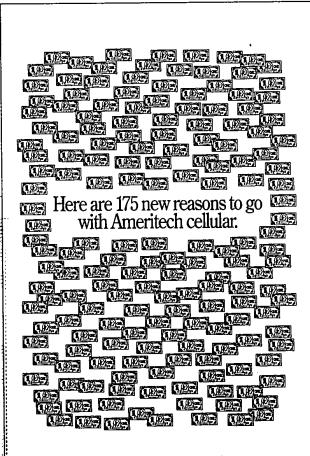
Abusive spouses and battered wives are found in all walks of life. One woman declared there's a false perception that only "bimboe" are stacked. A city council woman from the Detroit area told how ahe had been a battered will for many years. A woman from an affluent Oakland County suburb asid she had been beaten by her husband, an attorney.

husband, an attorney.

Baskin's task force wants to stop domestic violence, not only because of the injury it inflicts on the victim, but because it also harms the victim's family and even the community at large.

Many who spoke taiked about how their children also had been physically abused. Sadly, some of these victims grow up to become abusers themselves, repeating a pattern of behavior they learned at home.





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