

# Thomas M. Quinn III Recognizes October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month with Countywide Initiative



Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III announced today that his office will be recognizing October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month with a countywide initiative.

For the first time, in honor of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, the District Attorney's Office has sponsored an awareness campaign to run on buses in both Fall River and New Bedford through the Southeastern Regional Transit Authority beginning in October but running until the end of the year. The tagline "If not YOU...then WHO?" is intended to spark conversation and remind the community that we can all help to put an end to domestic violence by being active bystanders.

"I am proud to say that all throughout the month of October, my office will be leading the fight against domestic violence in Bristol County. We have planned a number of initiatives aimed at educating the public about domestic violence, providing resources for victims of domestic violence and will also be utilizing SRTA buses to urge people to speak up when

they know see domestic violence,” District Attorney Quinn said. “Statistics show that too many people feel domestic violence is none of their business and remain quiet even when they know someone is being victimized. This only perpetuates the cycle of abuse. Through this county-wide public relations campaign, I am hopeful that more incidences of domestic violence will be reported before tragedy strikes.”

For the second year his office will be sponsoring a month-long, cross-county cell phone collection drive in support of Verizon Wireless’ HopeLine® program, which collects unused wireless phones and parts to support survivors of domestic violence. Cell phone collection boxes are placed at police departments throughout the county; Acushnet, Attleboro, Berkley, Dartmouth, Dighton, Easton, Fairhaven, Fall River, Freetown, Mansfield, New Bedford, North Attleboro, Norton, Raynham, Rehoboth, Seekonk, Somerset, Swansea, Taunton, Westport. Cell phone collection boxes will also be placed at the four District Courts in the county; Attleboro, Fall River, New Bedford and Taunton. Last year, the Bristol County District Attorney’s Office donated almost 1,500 cell phones and accessories to the HopeLine program.

“Over the past few years, police departments in the Bristol County area have been collecting unused, functional cell phones as part of a national effort to make sure that local domestic and sexual violence programs here always have access to phones for victims in need. One in four women, one in nine men and more than 3 million children in the U.S. are affected by domestic violence,” said Somerset Police Chief George McNeil. “This yearly effort of collecting donated cell phones will help the Bristol County District Attorney’s Office, non-profit organizations and others to help break the cycle of domestic violence in our area. The Somerset Police Department is a staunch supporter of this program and is a location where you can drop off your old phones and chargers.”

Although the District Attorney is taking the opportunity to

spotlight domestic violence through Domestic Violence Awareness Month, his office fights for victims of domestic violence on a daily basis. Each of the four District Courts has a Domestic Violence Unit staffed by an Assistant District Attorney and Victim Witness Advocate specially trained to give much needed attention to these cases. The District Attorney's Office also coordinates a countywide high risk program called HART (High At Risk Team) which partners with key players in the county, such as police, probation, parole, and victim service agencies. The program is designed to monitor and prosecute serial, repeat domestic violence offenders and increase services to victims at high risk for re-assault. His staff also spends numerous hours in the community conducting trainings and collaborating on domestic violence initiatives.

"As part of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, the Seekonk Police Department is partnering with Bristol County District Attorney Thomas Quinn's Office and other local police agencies by participating in a cell phone drive," Seekonk Police Chief Craig Mace said. "The Seekonk Police Department will have a collection box in the front lobby of the Seekonk Public Safety Building. Donated cell phones will be collected and used to benefit domestic violence victims. We are committed to helping domestic violence victims in any way we can."

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