



TRANSITION HOUSE

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CAMBRIDGE MA.

4 April 1996

To the City Council of Cambridge:

We are writing this letter in support of Vice-Mayor Kathleen Leahy Born's order to the City Council to go on record expressing its concern that Thomas Downs, a Cambridge man was released on \$1,500 bail after allegedly trying to strangle a Cambridge woman, to District Attorney Thomas Reilly, Judge Brandt and the Trial Court Chief Justice John J. Irwin

The city of Cambridge has declared itself to be a Domestic Violence Free Zone, and with that comes accountability not only to victims of domestic violence but the community as well. In order for this city to go forward and see the reality of such a declaration, we have to include the judicial system.

On the Battered Women's Hotline, we received over 30 phone calls related to this latest incident of domestic violence. They were from victims who felt more trepidation about coming forward and going thru the court system. The calls were also from people in the community who were outraged at the low bond set on Thomas Downs for attempted murder.

We understand the difficulty of handing down judgments on cases of domestic violence. There is growing debate in this area. Keeping batterers accountable to their communities, thru the judicial process has been a weak link. The Governors Commission on Domestic Violence is currently looking at mandatory sentencing as a response to the insensitive judgments that have come down on the side of the abusers. We urge the city to recommend training of all Judges on the complex issue of domestic violence. These trainings should occur through out the Judges' appointment.

On behalf of the Transition House Community,

Dolores Aguirre
Outreach Coordinator



Consent Communication #14

5-181

Communication was received from Dolores Aguirre, outreach Coordinator, Transition House, transmitting its support for the order concerning Thomas Downs, a Cambridge man who was released on \$1,500 bail after allegedly trying to strangle a Cambridge women.

In City Council April 8, 1996

Placed on file