

*Feel Safe Again, Inc.*

~  
"Be Strong, Be Safe, and Be Heard!"<sup>SM</sup>

**Local Nonprofit Supports Senate Bill 1002  
An Act to Prevent Harassment**

**For Immediate Release**  
March 5, 2008

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**Everett, MA** - Feel Safe Again, Inc. founder and president, Cheryl Darisse, testified before the Joint Committee on the Judiciary at the State House in Boston, on March 4, 2008, in support of Senate Bill 1002, An Act to Prevent Harassment, on behalf of the organization and her sister Sandra Berfield.

The following is an excerpt from Darisse's testimony:

"My sister was stalked relentlessly for over two years by a customer she waited on at her place of employment. He followed her day and night, she received hang up calls, her tires were slashed, and battery acid was poured into her gas tank.

She was eventually murdered by a package bomb on January 20, 2000, that her stalker hand-delivered to her Everett, Massachusetts home. Unfortunately, she didn't qualify for a 209A, because she had no prior relationship. The only thing she could do was obtain a civil order. This left her without the protection she needed and deserved, which left the police unable to stop her stalker and prevent her tragic death.

She lived her life in a constant state of fear. She set up a surveillance camera and slept with a knife. She knew he was going to kill her. She knew it was just a matter of when and where. She felt completely helpless and alone. She asked for protection, but the system failed her.

For the past eight years, we have been trying to change these laws, in order to save other lives. In 2000, with the support of Senator Pamela P. Resor, we successfully amended the stalking law, now known as "Sandy's Law" which added criminal harassment. In 2004, we established January as Stalking Awareness Month, in order to educate the public about this serious crime of fear.

As you can see, victims without a prior relationship have waited too long. I beg you to vote favorably on behalf of this bill. I know we can prevent another tragedy, but only if we give these victims the protection they deserve, and law enforcement the tools they need."

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