



Legal Services Committee  
October 16, 2025

Amy Smith	HCDVCC
Thecia Jenkins	HCDVCC
Rebecca Council	HCDVCC
Morgan Penrice	HCDVCC
Alexia Rauen	Advocates for Immigrant Survivors
Libby Hasse	Tahirih
Jessica Howton	Houston Volunteer Lawyers

Amy Smith opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Introductions were made.

A discussion was held on the current funding landscape.

Amy asked if anyone noticed that Misdemeanor cases were being dismissed. Morgan Penrice stated that it appears in her client's cases they are convicting on one case and dismissing other cases in connection with the same defendant and client. Alexia said AFIS was noticing that jury trials were happening in cases especially in felony cases. Most Immigrant defendants are not being released from jail, so they are choosing jury trials. Also, the belief is that Immigrant survivors will cease to cooperate because of their fear of deportation so the defendants hope by going to trial it will end up in a dismissal. She also stated that the survivor's request for U-Visas are being brought up in trail.

Amy then asked if anyone has had any issues with getting Protective Orders. It was mentioned that on a few occasions the court was closed, and they were not notified. Alexia announced one of their clients had just received a 50-year P.O. in the 280<sup>th</sup>.

Amy thanked Jessica and Houston Volunteer Lawyers for providing HCDVCC advocates with an information session on Power of Attorney Clinics for our clients. Jessica stated that there were not really any new updates for HVL.

Libby Hasse announced that they have had 3 of their clients detained by ICE. She stated that some had been traveling for work and were stopped at the Boarder Checkpoints in the Valley and were detained even though they had valid work permits. She also stated that it seems if you

are detained and have an order to deport it is happening quickly. They are working with their clients on safety planning around driving and family preparedness. Jessica stated they have received some pushback for the Power of Attorney Clinics but as Amy stated all our clients should have power of attorney documents for their children. Libby said Katharina Dechert can do Enhanced Safety Planning training. Both Libby and Alexia stated their clients are in fear of reporting their abuse to law enforcement because of their immigration status.

Amy announced HCDVCC and several of our Community Partners are hosting a Candlelight Vigil on October 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6:30 at The Montrose Center to honor those lost to DV in the last year and to celebrate those survivors.

The next meeting will be on Thursday November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at 11:30 via ZOOM.

Meeting adjourned.