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**Settlement Reached in Leading Lawsuit under Washington Law
Protecting Victims of Domestic Violence**

*Victim of Domestic Violence Alleged Firing After Taking Leave to
Protect Family*

Moses Lake, WA --- December 22, 2010 --- The parties in the first lawsuit filed under Washington's Domestic Violence Leave Act have agreed to a settlement. Legal Voice, a women's rights organization, and Columbia Legal Services, a nonprofit law firm that provides legal services for low-income people, represented Ms. Doe, who claimed she was fired in violation of the law.

The Domestic Violence Leave Act, RCW 49.76, enacted in 2008, requires employers to give employees reasonable time off to attend court and take steps to ensure their and their children's safety if the employee is a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Legal Voice led the effort to draft and pass the law, which is designed to protect the employment rights of victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

In this case, Ms. Doe had a protection order prohibiting her ex-husband from coming near her or her children because of multiple incidents of domestic violence, including inflicting severe injuries on her and threatening to kill her. In her lawsuit, Ms. Doe alleged that she was terminated from her position after missing work to confer with the police, research options for secure shelter, and make sure her children could attend school safely.

While the employer does not admit liability in this case, it worked in good faith to settle the lawsuit. The settlement calls for Ms. Doe's return to work and payment of a substantial sum. In addition, the

employer has pledged management training on the provisions of the Domestic Violence Leave Act, as well as providing enhanced information, support, and referrals for employee victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

“Ms. Doe’s situation illustrates the difficult choice that a victim of violence may have to face – balancing her job while keeping her family safe,” said Janet Chung, a staff attorney with Legal Voice. “We are pleased that our client has been compensated appropriately.”

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Legal Voice is a nonprofit women’s rights legal organization that pursues justice for all women and girls in the Northwest through ground-breaking litigation, legislative advocacy, and educational tools to help individuals understand their rights.

Columbia Legal Services (CLS) is a nonprofit law firm that protects and defends the legal and human rights of low-income people. CLS represents people and organizations in Washington State with critical legal needs who have no other legal assistance available to them.