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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **News Coverage of Ottawa Officer Charged with Assault Raises Three Concerns for VAW Community**

Friday, May 30, 2008 – The Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women (OCTEVAW) would like to comment on the news that a local police officer within the Partner Assault Unit (PAU) has been charged in relation to a domestic situation with a number of offences.

On Wednesday, the Ottawa Sun reported the news in their article “*Assault raps laid against officer,*” releasing the survivor’s name. If this occurred without her consent, it is unacceptable as it takes away her anonymity and could possibly put her and her children’s safety at risk. It also poses a significant concern that other women who have experienced abuse will not come forward for fear of their name being publicly released. Reporting to police is already a difficult thing to do.

While we do not know the details of the case, this officer was said to be “well-liked.” This serves to illustrate that no matter how respected, well-known or accomplished a man is within his community, his behaviour at home with his intimate partner could still be abusive. Erin Williams, the Executive Director of OCTEVAW states: “Abuse can happen in any family in our community regardless of the abuser’s position in society.”

It was reported in the Ottawa Citizen by the Ottawa Police Association President that the officers on the PAU are faced with heavy case loads and that the unit is “strained to the max.” This represents how much of an issue violence against women is within our community. It also raises the question as to whether adequate resources are provided to the PAU, whose purpose is to hold abusers accountable. OCTEVAW lends its support to the Ottawa police in its efforts to assist its officers and the valuable work that they do.

Finally, it is important to note that the coalition believes that woman abuse is not caused by stress, but by some men’s belief in their right to control their partners through fear and intimidation.

For more information contact Erin Williams, Executive Director of OCTEVAW at 613-725-3601 ext.105.

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