**Suggested lobbying letter:**

**Re; Petition ‘Violence Against Women: Stop it Now’**

Members of Soroptimist International call on you to support a petition entitled ‘Violence Against Women – Stop it Now’. Our members have long been committed to campaigning against all forms of abuse.

The petition requests:

’ I call on Government to ensure that perpetrators of Violence Against Women are brought to Justice’.

The aim is:

To keep ‘Violence Against Women’ high on the Governments agenda; to ensure that the guidelines, statutory regulations and policies accompanying legislation to protect women and girls are developed and robustly applied, and to regularly assess the effectiveness of the guidance by monitoring and reporting on referrals and outcomes.

Our five areas of concern are Modern Day Slavery and the Sex Trade; Forced Marriage and Honour Killings; Female Genital Mutilation; Elder Abuse and Domestic Abuse.

These acts of abuse are now illegal in the UK, but prosecutions against perpetrators are negligible.

* Women are still being murdered at the rate of two a week by a current or former male partner.
* One in four women, in their lifetime, are subject to abuse, again by a current or former male partner causing serious morbidity issues; and social and economic isolation.
* Female Genital Mutilation; Modern Day Slavery and the Sex Trade are the domain of organised criminals.
* Despite Female Genital Mutilation being a criminal offence since 1985, there have been no prosecutions within the UK
* Honour Killing and Forced Marriage require premeditated planning within families and local communities.
* Elder abuse is usually perpetrated against women over 70yrs where access to them is denied by the very person who is abusing them. It is known that over 500,000 elderly living in the community are the subject of abuse. Many more are presently undetected.

We appreciate that for all the above, legislation recognises the criminality of such actions, however we are concerned that more could be done to bring the perpetrators to justice. It is imperative that the law and policies designed to protect women are vigorously applied, and that detection rates for such crimes are improved.

Soroptimists welcome the launch of the Draft Modern Slavery Bill and ask that you support this proposed legislation.

Soroptimists, facilitated by Jeremy Lefroy, MP for Stafford will be presenting the petition to David Cameron on Thursday 6 March 2014 at 13.00hrs. We invite you to join us.

This presentation is timed to mark The United Nations International Women’s Day, 8 March

Thanking you in anticipation