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**Statement of ABA President H. Thomas Wells, Jr. on  
Department of Homeland Security Decision regarding Asylum for Abused Women**

WASHINGTON, D.C., July 17, 2009 — At last, there is a clearer path to asylum for some of the most vulnerable women seeking protection in the United States. The Department of Homeland Security should be praised for its recent filing of a legal brief that recognizes that victims of domestic violence, in certain circumstances, may qualify for asylum in the United States.

The U.S. has made significant strides in recognizing and addressing crimes that affect primarily women, including domestic violence. We should not close the door to women who seek refuge from nations that do not provide those protections. This improved and clarified asylum policy will preserve our nation's position as a beacon of hope to those suffering persecution around the globe.

With more than 400,000 members, the American Bar Association is the largest voluntary professional membership organization in the world. As the national voice of the legal profession, the ABA works to improve the administration of justice, promotes programs that assist lawyers and judges in their work, accredits law schools, provides continuing legal education, and works to build public understanding around the world of the importance of the rule of law.

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