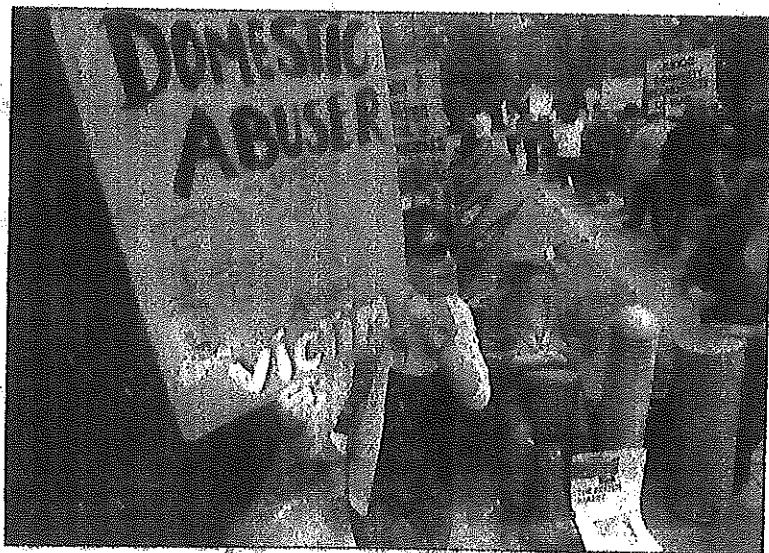


My backs
to
mine

Rally cites legal plight of those who are battered



By **ELAINE D'AURIZIO**
STAFF WRITER

PATERSON — The struggles of abused women to match their husbands' legal resources in court were the focus of a noon rally Friday by activist Sandra Ramos and some 35 survivors and supporters in front of the Passaic County Courthouse.

Ramos, who runs several battered women's shelters in Passaic County, said legal counseling is in short supply for women who flee with nothing but their children, and that the state judicial system should have greater sensitivity to their plight and take action.

For one, she called for the establishment of a civilian review board "where cases can be reviewed when children are wrongfully taken away."

"We want every victim to have an advocate sitting beside them in court instead of in the back of the courtroom ... they're petrified," she said. "We want judges to get training on the specific dynamics of domestic violence so they know why women act the way they do. And we want legal representation in court. There is no place for them to go now for legal help."

PASSAIC COUNTY

As she spoke, women — some with children in strollers — cheered, beat drums, and waved posters that included "Children Should Be Seen, Heard Believed, and Protected" and "Family Court Fails Women." They included contingents from New York, and several related their personal situations, alleging they had been subject to domestic abuse and then to a legal

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