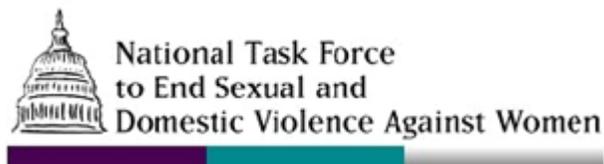


Forwarded by the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center, on behalf of the National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence Against Women; please see the NTF's website at 4vawa.org for more information.



Protect victims of dating violence and stalking from gun violence

October, 2014 – please forward widely

Current federal firearms laws do not protect all domestic violence victims. We are in the midst of a culture shift. Millennials, coming of age today, are getting married later in life than earlier generations. **74% of 20-somethings are unmarried**, compared to 32% in 1960.^[1] Current federal firearms laws do not protect these young people. We must insist Congress address this omission and ban people who have committed dating violence or stalking from owning firearms.

S. 1290, S. 2676, and H.R. 4906, bills introduced by Senators Klobuchar and Blumenthal and Representative Capps respectively, would close gaps in current law and ensure victims of dating violence and stalking are protected from firearms violence. Urge your Senators and Representatives to support these life-saving bills. Congress is back home until the elections. Call your Senators' and Representative's DC and district offices and let them know it should not matter whether or not you are married to an offender—federal law should protect ALL victims, including victims of dating violence and stalking.

Background: In 1996, Congress passed the Lautenberg Amendment, prohibiting people convicted of misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence from owning firearms.^[2] Legislators understood that many violent felony-level crimes involving domestic violence are ultimately pled down to misdemeanors—as with the recent case involving football star Ray Rice. The law already prohibited gun ownership by felons, and Congress expanded that ban to ensure abusers could not use plea bargains to evade the consequences of their actions.

Dating Violence: The federal domestic violence firearms ban **does not apply to offenders who harm their dating partners**.^[3] Under current federal law, the abuser who punches, strangles or beats a dating partner is still **legally able to purchase firearms** even if convicted of the misdemeanor crime of domestic violence. This is unconscionable! The law must protect ALL victims of domestic violence, regardless of their marital status!

This is a serious gap in federal law – we *demand* Congress fix this!

- A woman whose partner owns a firearm is **five times** more likely to be killed than a woman whose partner does not own a firearm.^[4]
- A **majority** of intimate partner homicide victims are killed with firearms.^[5]

We must tell our legislators the current definition of 'intimate partner' is woefully out of date and insist they expand the definition to include former and current dating partners.

Stalking: Federal law also fails to keep guns out of the hands of persons convicted of misdemeanor crimes of stalking. The Cardinals football team just signed Chris Rainey, who pled guilty to a misdemeanor stalking charge.[6] Rainey sent threatening messages to his ex-girlfriend, telling her, “Time to die, bitch”. [7] Despite his misdemeanor **stalking conviction** (he pled down from a felony charge), Rainey, who explicitly threatened his girlfriend’s life, can **legally purchase a firearm**. Stalking is legally defined as conduct pursued “to kill, injure, harass, or place under surveillance with intent to kill, injure, harass, or intimidate, or cause substantial emotional distress”. [8] Clearly, stalking is a very serious crime, but federal law fails to keep guns out of the hands of convicted offenders like Chris Rainey.

- **1 in 6** women and **1 in 19** men have been stalked. [9]
- **76%** of women **killed** by intimate partners were stalked before being murdered. [10]

Contact your Senators and House member to support S. 1290, S. 2676, and H.R. 4906, bills introduced by Senators Klobuchar and Blumenthal and Representative Capps

IT’S DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH. BE SURE YOUR SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVE ARE AWARE - EDUCATE THEM AND ASK THEM TO COSPONSOR THESE BILLS!!

ACTION: CALL OR EMAIL YOUR SENATORS & TELL THEM:

“We support S.1290 and S. 2676, because keeping guns out of the hands of abusers and stalkers is key to saving lives. Dating partners need to have the same protections as other intimate partners! Stalking is a key indicator of lethality. Lives are at stake - the sooner Congress acts, the fewer people will die!”

ACTION!! CALL OR EMAIL YOUR REPRESENTATIVE & TELL HER/HIM:

“We support H.R. 4906, because keeping guns out of the hands of abusers and stalkers is key to saving lives. Dating partners need have the same protections as other intimate partners! Stalking is a key indicator of lethality. Lives are at stake - the more quickly Congress acts, the fewer people will die!”

Tell your friends, family and loved ones to call and email too!

WE NEED TO FLOOD CONGRESSIONAL OFFICES WITH CALLS AND EMAILS!

ACTION!! MEET WITH YOUR MEMBERS OR THEIR STAFF AND EXPLAIN WHY PROTECTING PEOPLE FROM GUN VIOLENCE IS IMPORTANT TO YOU:

Your Members of Congress must understand that this issue impacts their state and their constituents. All victims of domestic violence and stalking need protection from gun violence. These bills will save lives!

ACTION!! ATTEND CAMPAIGN EVENTS AND ASK THE HARD QUESTIONS:

Ask your Senators and House member, in public forums or letters to the editor, whether or not they will support bills such as S. 1290 and S. 2676 (Senate race)/H.R. 4906 (House race) to keep guns out of the hands of violent offenders.

Further Reading:

<http://www.thehotline.org/resources/firearms-dv/>
<https://jwi.org/document.doc?id=481>

http://nnedv.org/downloads/Policy/DomesticViolence_Guns_Factsheet.pdf
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/senate-bill/1290>
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/senate-bill/2676>
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/4906>
www.americansforresponsiblesolutions.org
www.everytown.org
www.smartgunlaws.org
www.vpc.org

If you aren't on one of the VAWA email lists or want to add members of your staff or state/community leaders to our grassroots alerts e-mailing list, send names and contact information including email to ntfvawaalerts@icasa.org.

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- [1] Pew Research (2010). *The decline of marriage and rise of the new families*. Retrieved from <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2010/11/18/the-decline-of-marriage-and-rise-of-new-families/>.
- [2] 18 U.S.C. 92(g(9))
- [3] 18 U.S.C. 921(33)
- [4] John Hopkins Center for Gun Policy and Research (2003). *Firearms and intimate partner violence*. Retrieved from www.jhsph.edu/gunpolicy/IPV_firearms.pdf.
- [5] Bridges, F. S., Tatum, K. M., & Kunselman, J. C. (2008). Domestic violence statutes and rates of intimate partner and family homicide: A research note. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 19(1), 117-130.
- [6] Smith, M. D. (2014). *Cardinals sign Chris Rainey, whom Steelers cut over domestic violence allegation*. Retrieved from <http://profootballtalk.nbcsports.com/2014/09/09/cardinals-sign-chris-rainey-whom-steelers-cut-over-domestic-violence-allegation/>.
- [7] ESPN (2010). *Chris Rainey faces felony stalking charges*. Retrieved from <http://sports.espn.go.com/nfl/news/story?id=5570905>.
- [8] 8 U.S.C. 2261A (2(A))
- [9] Fox, J. A., & Zawitz, M. W. (2004). Homicide trends in the United States' US Department of Justice. *Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics*. Retrieved from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/homicide/homtrnd.htm>
- [10] McFarlane, J. M., Campbell, J. C., Wilt, S., Sachs, C. J., Ulrich, Y. & Xu, X. (1999). Stalking and intimate partner femicide. *Homicide Studies*, 3(4), 300-316.



National Task Force
to End Sexual and
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