



Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Written Testimony

Bipartisan Task Force on Gun Violence Prevention & Children's Safety Gun Violence Prevention Working Group

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Member Agencies

Center for Domestic Violence Services
at BHcare
Ansonia, CT

The Center for Women & Families
Bridgeport, CT

Women's Center
Danbury, CT

Domestic Violence Program
United Services
Dayville, CT

Network Against Domestic Abuse
Enfield, CT

Domestic Abuse Services
Greenwich YWCA
Greenwich, CT

Interval House
Hartford, CT

Meriden-Wallingford Chrysalis
Meriden, CT

New Horizons
Middletown, CT

Prudence Crandall Center
New Britain, CT

Center for Domestic Violence Services
at BHcare
New Haven, CT

Safe Futures
New London, CT

Domestic Violence Crisis Center
Norwalk, CT

Women's Support Services
Sharon, CT

Domestic Violence Crisis Center
Stamford, CT

Susan B. Anthony Project
Torrington, CT

Safe Haven
Waterbury, CT

Domestic Violence Program
United Services
Willimantic, CT

Of the eleven people killed last year in Connecticut as a result of intimate partner violence, nine of them were killed with a gun. While gun safety is and should be a broad topic, an important component of that conversation is the connection between guns and domestic violence fatalities. Keeping guns away from known abusers is a critical piece of any gun safety policy developed by this working group.

According to the 2011 report of the CT Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee, Connecticut experienced 146 intimate partner fatalities between 2000 and 2009. Guns were the number one cause of death in those fatalities. Furthermore, in 2010, of all of the women killed by a firearm in the United States, almost two-thirds of them were killed by an intimate partner.

Research by renowned national expert, Dr. Jacqueline Campbell, demonstrates that access to firearms increases the risk of intimate partner homicide more than five times compared to instances where there are no weapons. Those abusers who possess guns also tend to inflict the most severe abuse on their partners.

In Connecticut, our Lethality Assessment Program (one of ten pilot sites in the nation) seeks to identify those victims who are most at risk for increased danger or possible fatality. Two of the top indicators of lethality are whether or not the abuser has ever used or threatened to use a weapon against the victim, or whether or not he possesses a gun.

The CT General Assembly passed historic legislation in 1994 that prohibits possession of a firearm by individuals subject to a restraining or protective order issued by a court in a case involving the use, attempted use or threatened use of physical force against another person. Unfortunately, despite the efforts of the CT General Assembly, these policies are not always enforced.

Just two weeks ago an East Hartford police officer was arrested as a result of domestic violence incident and a protective order was issued for the victim. However, the judge failed to immediately deny a request by the police officer's attorney requesting that he be allowed to carry his firearm during working hours, which would clearly violate CGS § 29-36f. Failure to properly enforce these laws leaves victims at risk for increased violence.

Additionally, it is critical that Connecticut has a strict permit process in place for "long guns" that ensures the proper background check is done on individuals purchasing such firearms. Universal background checks are also essential to guarantee that individuals cannot illegally acquire firearms.

We applaud the efforts of the Bipartisan Task Force on Gun Violence and Children's Safety to address these serious issues. We strongly encourage you to consider the needs of domestic violence victims as you develop your recommendations.

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