



National Task Force Cheers Release by U.S. Department of Justice of Policing Guidance on Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence

December 17, 2015

The [National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence](#) (NTF) represents state, tribal and local advocates, faith based groups, civil and women's rights groups all of whom work to eradicate domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking. Our diverse, nationwide coalition wishes to express its thanks and appreciation to Attorney General Loretta Lynch, the Office on Violence Against Women, the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Office, and the Civil Rights Division for releasing guidance to improve law enforcement handling and response to domestic violence and sexual assault.

The new guidance, [Identifying and Preventing Gender Bias in Law Enforcement Response to Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence](#), is intended as a tool to aid law enforcement in strengthening internal policies as well as improving officer responses to and investigation of the crimes of sexual assault and domestic violence.

NTF is particularly mindful of the importance of these guidelines in light of the recent [Dollar General](#) argument before the Supreme Court where tribal sovereignty and the ability to hold non-Native perpetrators of sexual assault accountable were at issue, and the conviction of former Oklahoma City law enforcement officer, [Daniel Holtzclaw](#). The police officer was charged with targeting and assaulting 13 Black women and we were all reminded of the barriers that victims of rape and sexual assault face as they decide or try to seek justice. Many survivors are women whose multiple and intersecting identities (whether Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, Latina, Black, poor, immigrant, LGBT, possessing a disability or aging to name examples) may inform the experiences they have had with law enforcement, and their willingness or ability to seek help. This was most certainly the case for the Black women survivors in the Holtzclaw case, whose identities and experiences led them to believe that law enforcement would not believe them or seek justice on their behalf. To add insult to injury, many were chided in court for not reporting any of the assaults.

NTF looks forward to working closely with the Department of Justice, tribal, state, county and local law enforcement along with our state, tribal and local service providers to map out strategies for implementing this important guidance tool for improving

responses to survivors. We are determined that this effort must prioritize the elimination of gender bias and fully acknowledge, respect and address all survivor's identities, particularly where they intersect. We believe that the experts, the providers and the police can work together to ensure that ALL victims are treated fairly and that ALL victims of sexual assault and domestic violence are accorded every legal resource as they seek justice.

What more can you do:

Sample Tweets:

Tweets to Attorney General Lynch @Loretta Lynch

#DOJ guidance recognizes the civil rights of survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. Bravo @LorettaLynch! #Together2EndBias

Thank you @LorettaLynch for your commitment to addressing gender bias in law enforcement. #Together2EndBias

#DOJ guidance on policing domestic violence&sexual assault is critical to reforming criminal justice. Bravo @LorettaLynch #Together2EndBias

Many police officers have been & continue to be partners in the fight to end gender biased policing. Bravo @LorettaLynch #Together2EndBias

Tweets to DOJ @TheJusticeDept

Thank you @TheJusticeDept for outlining 8 principles that can help keep victims safe and hold offenders accountable #Together2EndBias

New #DOJ guidance will aid police efforts to reduce sexual assault&domestic violence. Thank you @TheJusticeDept! #Together2EndBias

Domestic violence&sexual assault survivors deserve equal protection under the law, says #DOJ. Thank you, @TheJusticeDept. #Together2EndBias

Tweet to DOJ's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services @COPSOoffice

Gender-biased policing hurts. New #DOJ guidance urges community & police partners to work #Together2EndBias. Thank you, @COPSOoffice.

Tweet to DOJ's Office on Violence Against Women @OVWJustice

Bravo @OVWJustice for your work on #DOJ guidance to combat bias in policing domestic violence & sexual assault crimes #Together2EndBias

Tweet to DOJ Civil Rights @CivilRights

Bravo @CivilRights for your work on the #DOJ guidance to eliminate gender biased policing. We look forward to working #Together2EndBias

Resources:

- Letter by [over 180 national, state, and local organizations](#)
- [The DOJ press release](#)
- [The Guidance](#) and other [related DOJ resources](#)
- Statements from groups: [the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence](#), [the ACLU](#), [Legal Momentum](#), [Women of Color Network](#)
- [Talking points on the guidance](#)

Articles:

<http://www.cosmopolitan.com/politics/news/a50842/the-medias-disgraceful-silence-on-daniel-holtzclaw>

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/legal-momentum/who-will-believe-these-wo_b_8787054.html