

Gabby Giffords, Domestic Violence Prevention Advocates Urge Sens. Cruz, Cornyn to Help Protect Women from Gun Violence

More Than 100 Texas Women Killed in 2012 By Domestic Violence; Women in U.S. Are 11 Times More Likely to Be Victims of Gun Violence Than Women in Other High-Income Countries

Call for Action on Bill to Keep Guns Out of Stalkers' Hands Comes After U.S. Senate's First-Ever Hearing on Intersection of Domestic Violence and Gun Violence

WASHINGTON, D.C. [July 30, 2014] – Former Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, Co-Founder of Americans for Responsible Solutions, and domestic violence prevention advocates called on Texas Senators Ted Cruz and John Cornyn today to support proposed legislation that protects women and families from gun violence by keeping guns out of the hands of domestic abusers and stalkers.

The call for action comes after the United States Senate Judiciary Committee held its first-ever hearing today on the nexus of guns and domestic violence and what Congress can do to protect women. Among the legislation discussed was a proposal by Minnesota Senator Amy Klobuchar that would prevent individuals convicted of misdemeanor stalking and those convicted of abusing their dating partners from legally purchasing a gun.

Congresswoman Giffords delivered a petition to Chairman Leahy signed by 37,000 Americans earlier this year requesting the hearing.

“Dangerous people who get their hands on guns are a threat to women, families, and our communities. That’s why gun violence is a women’s issue,” **said Congresswoman Giffords.** “Today’s Senate Judiciary Committee hearing was an important first step on the road to strengthening our laws. So now it is time for Congress to come together – Republicans and Democrats – and pass legislation that helps protect women from gun violence. It is time for action. Women’s lives in Texas and across the country are at stake.”

“Three times as many women are killed by intimate partners with guns than are killed by any combination of strangers’ guns, knives and other weapons. Getting guns out of the hands of abusers is doable, sensible and will save the lives of women in Texas,” **said Kim A. Gandy, the President & CEO of the National Network to End Domestic Violence.** I urge Congress to take swift action to address the lethal intersection between domestic violence and gun violence.”

"Time and time again, we have seen that guns and domestic violence are a lethal mix in Texas. When an individual with a demonstrated history of domestic abuse or stalking decides to use a gun, the results are usually deadly for women. In 2012 alone, domestic abusers killed more than 100 women in Texas," **said Deborah D. Tucker, Executive Director, National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence.** "Stronger laws that help keep guns out of the hands of those known to use domestic and sexual violence and stalking will help protect women and make our communities safer."

Guns and domestic violence are a lethal mix in Texas, and guns play a major role in violence against women by intimate partners. According to a recent study, 114 women were killed in Texas in 2012 due to an act of domestic violence and 102 were killed by an intimate partner in 2011. One in three Texans also report experiencing violence at the hands of an intimate partner.

Nationally, women are 11 times more likely to be murdered by a gun than women in other high-income countries, and abused women are five times more likely to be killed by their abuser if the abuser has access to a firearm. In 36 states, more than half of intimate partner-related homicides of women in each state involved a gun. In addition, stalking affects one in six women in the United States, and more than three-quarters female intimate partner homicide victims were stalked prior to being murdered.

Current federal law prohibits convicted domestic abusers from legally buying guns. However, individuals who have been convicted of misdemeanor stalking are not prohibited from purchasing firearms; they can still pass a background check and buy a gun through the so-called 'stalker gap'. Another gap in federal law exists where the law prevents convicted domestic abusers from firearms access but excludes those in dating relationships from that same protection. This leaves women in dating relationships who are not married, do not live with their partner, or do not share a child in common vulnerable to escalating abuse and gun violence. In fact, in 2008, nearly half of all domestic violence homicides were committed against a current or former dating partner.

Additionally, convicted domestic abusers (who are prohibited from gun access) can evade the law and still purchase a gun at a gun show or on the Internet, where sales of guns do not require a background check.

This past year has seen bipartisan momentum for laws aimed at preventing gun violence against women. In 2014, six states – Louisiana, Maryland, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Washington, and Wisconsin – have enacted domestic gun violence legislation that will protect women with overwhelming support from both political parties.

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Americans for Responsible Solutions (ARS) is working across the country to build an organization with millions of people committed to finding sensible ways to reduce gun violence and encouraging elected officials to enact responsible firearms policies that protect the Second Amendment. Today, ARS stands more than 500,000 strong.

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