



NNEDV Encourages Senate to Protect Victims from Gun Violence

[Washington, DC – April 17, 2013] NNEDV anticipates votes in the U.S. Senate this afternoon on firearms legislation, which would be a critical step in protecting victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking from gun violence. The Toomey-Manchin amendment to expand background checks needs 60 votes to pass.

"NNEDV calls on each Senator to vote to strengthen, not weaken, protections for victims of domestic and sexual violence," said Kim Gandy, NNEDV President and CEO. "Firearms and domestic violence perpetrators are a lethal combination. Each year a shocking number of women are killed by batterers using firearms."

More than three women a day, on average, are killed by an intimate partner, and guns play a large role in the level of lethality. Access to firearms dramatically increases the risk of intimate partner homicide, compared to instances where there are no weapons, and abusers who possess guns tend to inflict the most severe abuse on their partners. Women in the United States are more than 11 times more likely to be murdered with guns than women in any other developed nation. More than half of women murdered with guns in the U.S. are killed by intimate partners. More than half of mass shootings are acts of domestic violence or family violence.

Federal law prohibits domestic violence offenders from purchasing guns. One study showed this restriction as the second most common reason for denial of handgun purchase applications. Yet many of those individuals have been able to access guns through private sale, on the Internet, or at a gun show, where background checks are not required, and the results have been devastating.

"The gaping background check loophole often makes the federal protections moot," said Gandy. "By requiring background checks in private sales, Congress can ensure that the federal protections are consistent, effective and most importantly, lifesaving."

Additionally, Senators could vote on an amendment to federal law that would prohibit the sale or transfer of firearms and ammunition to persons convicted of dating violence and stalking, which would expand current federal law that only applies this prohibition to domestic violence offenders.

"This will dramatically reduce dangerous and violent individuals' access to unregulated firearms," said Gandy.

The Senate could also consider harmful and unnecessary amendments that would allow individuals with concealed carry permits to legally take their guns with them to any state in the country—whether that state has concealed carry laws or not. This would make it almost impossible to prevent firearms violence in domestic violence, dating violence and stalking cases, because the least restrictive state laws will become the standard for the whole country.

"People are fed up with violence in this country. Fed up with fear and fed up with anger. We know the statistics, we know the solution," concluded Gandy. "Now we just need Senators to vote to protect women's lives."

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