



Victim Advocates Mourn the Passing of Senator Lautenberg

Champion for victims of domestic violence worked ardently to keep guns away from abusers

[Washington, DC ~ June 3, 2013] – Today, the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) mourns the passing of Senator Frank Lautenberg, a statesman and champion for victims of domestic violence. Among many accomplishments, Sen. Lautenberg authored legislation that keeps guns out of the hands of convicted batterers.

“We have lost a true champion today. Because of Senator Lautenberg’s work, victims of domestic violence are safer. He lived with purpose and will be missed terribly,” said Kim Gandy, NNEDV’s President and CEO.

The Domestic Violence Gun Ban, which passed in 1996, amended the Gun Control Act of 1968 to prohibit gun ownership for individuals who were convicted of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence. Prior to the Lautenberg Amendment, only those convicted of felonies could be prohibited from gun ownership and possession. That loophole left a tragic opportunity for domestic violence offenders to access weapons and use them against their intimate partners.

The amendment received overwhelming bipartisan support after Sen. Lautenberg’s passionate arguments documenting the alarming increase risk of homicide in domestic violence cases when guns were involved. Senator Lautenberg’s remarks when President Clinton signed the bill in 1996:

Mr. President, over the years there will be thousands of women like this, each one with a family of loved ones, each one with their own dreams. And there will be children. And they will all live, Mr. President. They will all live because of what we do here this day.

Mr. President, you and I will never know the women and children whose lives we are about to save. They will never have a chance to thank us. They will never know that their lives were spared.

But for the rest of our lives, you and I and other Senators, we will have the privilege of knowing that we have lived up to the very highest of our own ideals. We have done nothing less than reach forward into time, put our hands around tragedy and death and remolded it back into life itself.

His work to close this loophole has undoubtedly saved the lives of many domestic violence survivors. Department of Justice statistics show that hundreds of thousands of gun applications have been denied to convicted domestic violence offenders since the passage of this bill.

“We are in Washington, D.C. this week advocating for an amendment that would strengthen Sen. Lautenberg’s legislation by expanding background checks and improving the collection of information that would stop batterers from accessing firearms,” said Kim Gandy. “As we mourn the Senator’s passing, we honor his work and promote his legacy.”

“Senator Lautenberg was a staunch supporter of initiatives addressing domestic violence throughout his career. Of particular note was his 1996 amendment to the Gun Control Act which denied gun ownership to people who commit acts of domestic violence,” said Sandy Clark, Associate Executive Director, New Jersey Coalition for Battered Women. “Senator Lautenberg consistently voted to support victims of domestic violence and their children and provided leadership on this issue. He will be greatly missed.”

To learn more about the Domestic Violence Gun Ban, please see this report compiled by Sen. Lautenberg’s office:

www.lautenberg.senate.gov/documents/domestic/THE%20DOMESTIC%20VIOLENCE%20GUN%20BAN.pdf
