



For Immediate Release

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National Network Applauds Obama Administration's Proposed Gun Violence Policies

NNEDV Urges that Domestic Violence Homicides Be Addressed

The National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) applauds the recommendations put forward today by President Obama and Vice President Biden in response to the devastating impact of gun violence. The very fact that the Administration has undertaken this initiative represents a significant step forward in making our country a safer place.

“This Administration cares deeply about both gun violence and violence against women,” said Kim Gandy, President and CEO of NNEDV. “The incidence of domestic violence homicide sits squarely at the intersection of these two important policy priorities.”

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. We know that access to firearms dramatically increases the risk of intimate partner homicide, compared to instances where there are no weapons, and that abusers who possess guns tend to inflict the most severe abuse on their partners. Congress and the Administration must support targeted, effective policies that respond to the crisis of domestic violence homicide.

“Domestic violence is not a tangential issue,” said Gandy. “It must be interwoven into the overall response to gun violence. The protections and restrictions on guns announced today will reduce the risks for victims of domestic violence, indeed for all people, and we are grateful to the Obama Administration for putting them forward. There is also a need for specific policies that focus on the particular risk that guns pose to victims of domestic violence.”

The president's call for universal background checks will make a particular impact on victims of domestic violence. The lifesaving Domestic Violence Offender Gun Ban already prohibits gun possession by those convicted of domestic abuse or who are subject to a domestic violence restraining order – indeed 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.

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Legislation must close the private gun sale loophole, including Internet and gun show sales of firearms, and implement required background checks for all those seeking to purchase guns. This will dramatically reduce batterers' access to unregulated firearms.

There must also be increased federal support for consistent implementation of the Domestic Violence Offender Gun Ban. Limited resources at the state and local level have hampered the positive impact of this legislation, and federal resources are needed to ensure that it is applied fully, consistently and effectively. There must also be support and funding for domestic violence homicide reduction initiatives and lethality assessments, and prioritizing of best practices in the development of model policies and protocol for law enforcement agencies in responding to domestic violence homicides. These funding investments must be matched by investment in services, as victim service providers see increases in referrals as these initiatives are implemented.

Finally, in addition to congressional action on all of the president's recommendations, Congress must also act promptly to lift restrictions that have prevented research on gun violence prevention by the Center for Disease Control, the National Institutes of Health, and other agencies and partners.

"We should all be outraged over how many women are killed by gun violence. When abusers have access to firearms, victims are in grave danger," concluded Gandy.

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NNEDV, a 501(c)(3) organization, is the leading voice for domestic violence victims and their allies. NNEDV members include all 56 of the state and territorial coalitions against domestic violence, including over 2,000 local programs. NNEDV has been a premiere national organization advancing the movement against domestic violence for almost 20 years, having led efforts among domestic violence advocates and survivors in urging Congress to pass the landmark Violence Against Women Act of 1994. To learn more about NNEDV, please visit www.nnedv.org.