

# The Zero Tolerance for Domestic Abusers Act

Introduced by Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-MI) and Rep. Dan Donovan (R-NY)

**Overview:** The Zero Tolerance for Domestic Abusers Act clarifies current law to increase protections for victims of domestic abuse, violence and stalking by: 1) barring convicted stalkers from buying or owning firearms and 2) ensuring people who have abused dating partners are prohibited from buying or owning firearms.

**Stalking:** This legislation clarifies existing law to make clear that convicted stalkers cannot legally purchase a firearm. In recent years, several states have taken action to restrict stalkers' access to guns. Stalking is a sadly accurate predictor of future violence:

- 1 in 6 women has experienced stalking victimization during her lifetime;<sup>1</sup>
- 6.6 million people are stalked annually in the United States;<sup>2</sup>
- 66% of female stalking victims were stalked by a current or former intimate partner;<sup>3</sup>
- One study of female murder victims in 10 cities found that 76 percent of women murdered and 85 percent who survived a murder attempt by a current or former intimate partner experienced stalking in the year preceding the murder.<sup>4</sup>

**Dating Partners:** This legislation ensures that people who have abused dating partners are prohibited from buying or owning firearms. Current federal law prohibits someone from owning a gun if they are convicted of abusing a spouse, someone they live with, or someone they have a child with from getting guns. But the law is silent about people who have abused their current or former dating partners. Abuse of a dating partner is as unacceptable as domestic abuse, plain and simple.

- More nonfatal violence against women was committed by a current or former boyfriend than by a current or former spouse – 39 percent versus 25 percent;<sup>5</sup>
- 48.6 percent of all intimate partner homicides were committed by a dating partner.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> TK Logan, "Research on Partner Stalking: Putting the Pieces Together" (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky, Department of Behavioral Science & Center on Drug and Alcohol Research, 2010),

<sup>2</sup> Katrina Baum et al., "Stalking Victimization in the United States," Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> National Center for Injury Prevention and Control and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Intimate Partner Violence in the United States—2010" (2010)

<sup>4</sup> Judith M. McFarland and others, "Stalking and Intimate Partner Femicide," *Homicide Studies* 3 (4) (1999): 300–316.

<sup>5</sup> Bureau of Justice Statistics, Nonfatal Domestic Violence, 2003–2012

<sup>6</sup> Bureau of Justice Statistics, Homicide Trends in the United States, 1980–2008