interfaith coalition against domestic & sexual violence

JWI.ORG

June 9, 2016

Dear Members of Congress,

As clergy members, faith leaders, and national faith-based organizations representing a diverse range of religious traditions, we believe that every person has the right to live free from violence and we are committed to fostering safe homes and communities. Domestic violence, dating abuse, and stalking are extreme violations of the dignity and humanity of a person, and these crimes have no place in our faith traditions. Wherever we see these crimes occurring, we must speak out, and when there is an opportunity to act, we must act. The epidemic of domestic violence, dating abuse, and stalking has a lethal intersection with convicted criminals' access to firearms. As faith leaders and advocates, we urge you to cosponsor commonsense legislation to update our laws and prohibit violent abusers from purchasing or possessing guns.

The Zero Tolerance for Domestic Abusers Act (H.R. 3130) and the Protecting Domestic Violence and Stalking Victims Act (S.1520) would close loopholes that allow convicted abusers and stalkers to buy and own guns. Currently, individuals convicted of misdemeanor domestic violence who have not cohabited with their victim or who do not have a child with their victim, and individuals convicted of misdemeanor stalking, are not prohibited from purchasing or possessing guns. When convicted abusers and stalkers have guns, women's lives are at risk.

Domestic violence is an epidemic in the United States, with one in four women experiencing severe physical abuse by an intimate partner, and the presence of a gun in a violent relationship raises the risk of homicide for women by a shocking five hundred percent. There is also a strong connection between stalking and future violence: one study found that seventy-six percent of women murdered by a current or former intimate partner experienced stalking in the year preceding the murder. Additionally, misdemeanor stalking convictions commonly arise out of domestic violence charges that are pled down: many stalking misdemeanants have already physically abused the victim.

Nearly half of all intimate partner homicides were committed by a dating partner, and stalking behavior is often used by an abuser to menace a victim after she leaves the relationship. Under current federal law, these convicted abusers can legally purchase and possess deadly firearms, which are all too often used to threaten, injure, and kill victims.

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As nearly five hundred members of the faith community, we urge you to cosponsor the Zero Tolerance for Domestic Abusers Act (H.R. 3130) or the Protecting Domestic Violence and Stalking Victims Act (S.1520). In closing loopholes, this commonsense legislation would save lives and make our communities safer places for victims and survivors to worship, heal, and thrive. As people of faith, we affirm the right of every person to live free from violence, and we ask that you act now to protect that sacred right.

Sincerely,

Interfaith Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence

The Interfaith Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence is a partnership of 36 national faith organizations working together to advocate for federal legislation and public policies that protect all people from domestic and sexual violence, with particular focus on women and youth. As a national coalition representing millions of congregants and constituents from diverse faith communities, our moral, religious and ethical commitments guide our work in ending violence against women.

ADDITIONAL SIGNATORIES:

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Little Rock

Rev. Jay Clark
Pulaski Heights United
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Rabbi Randall Konigsburg
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Walnut Creek

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Encino

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Park Hill Congregational UCC
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Rev. Stephan Papa
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Our Savior's Lutheran Church
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Rev. Chad Delaney
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Toledo

Sister Phyllis Kemper
Ursulines of Brown County
Cincinnati

Sr. Geraldine Nowak
Sisters of St. Francis
Sylvania

OKLAHOMA

Rev. Todd Freeman
College Hill Presbyterian
Tulsa

Rev. Raymond Knapp
Parish Church of St. Jerome
Tulsa

OREGON

Bishop Bavi Rivera
Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Oregon
Cove

Cantor Ida Rae Cahana
Congregation Beth Israel
Portland

Rev. Cecil Prescod
Ainsworth United Church of Christ
Portland

Rev. Dr. Deborah Patterson
Smyrna United Church of Christ
Canby

Rev. Rebecca Strader
Christ's Church Methodist and Presbyterian United
Falls City United Methodist Church
Monmouth

PENNSYLVANIA

Cantor Michele Gray-Schaffer
B'nai Abraham
Butler

Cantor Jamie Marx
Temple Sholom
Broomall

Rabbi Meryl Crean
Wyndmoor

Rabbi Richard Hirsh
Wynnewood

Rabbi Valerie Joseph
Philadelphia

Rabbi Beth Kalisch
Beth David Reform Congregation
Gladwyne

Rabbi Audrey Korotkin
Temple Beth Israel
Altoona

Rabbi Alan LaPayover
Reconstructionist Rabbinical College
Philadelphia

Rabbi Robert Leib
Huntingdon Valley

Rabbi Rayzel Raphael
Temple Israel of Lehighton
Melrose Park

Rabbi Reena Spicehandler
Philadelphia

Rabbi Shawn Zevit
Mishkan Shalom
Philadelphia

Rev. Marian Shearer
Reading

Rev. Charlotte Whiting
Salem United Church of Christ of Rohrerstown
Lancaster

Rev. Dr. Janet Edwards
Community House Presbyterian Church
Pittsburgh

Sister Dolores Chepiga
Sisters of St. Joseph
New Freedom

Sister Colleen Dauerbach
Sisters of St. Joseph
Philadelphia

Sister Patricia Lowery, MD
Medical Mission Sisters
Philadelphia

Sister Rita Lynch
Mission Helpers of the Sacred Heart
North East

Sister Margaret Mary McLaughlin
Sisters of St. Joseph
Philadelphia

Sister Marie Notwick
Sister of St. Joseph
Flourtown

Sister Jeanette Bussen
Sisters of St. Joseph
Baden

Sister Ann Marie Slavin
Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia
Aston

Rabbi Linda Potemken
Congregation Beth Israel of Media
Media

SOUTH CAROLINA

The Rev. Dr. Joanne Sizoo
Grace Presbyterian Church
Fort Mill

TENNESSEE

Deaconess Claire Lovelace
Munsey Memorial United Methodist Church
Jonesborough

Rabbi Cantor John Kaplan
B'nai Israel
Jackson

Rev. Brandon Gilvin
First Christian Church
Chattanooga

Rev. Dr. David Butler, Retired
United Methodist Church
Hermitage

Rev. Sharon Temple
Brookmeade Congregational UCC
Nashville

TEXAS

Rev. Glennda Hardin
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
Liberty

Brother Gerard Sullivan, ISM
Marianist
San Antonio

Cantor Devorah Avery
Temple Shalom
Dallas

Cantor Julie Berlin
San Antonio

Cantor Renee Waghalter
Houston

Rabbi Cantor Marie Betcher
Cedar Park Police Chaplain
Cedar Park

Rev. Jan Orr-Harter
Presbyterian Peace Fellowship
Aledo

Rev. Charlotte Vaughan Coyle
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Paris

VIRGINIA

Cantor Jason Kaufman
Beth El Hebrew Congregation
Alexandria

Rabbi Gary Creditor
Rabbi Emeritus, Temple Beth-El
Richmond

Rabbi Steven Rein
Alexandria
Rev. Tracy Howe Wispelwey
Westminster Presbyterian Church
Charlottesville

Rev. Kate Walker
Mt Vernon Unitarian Church
Alexandria

Rev. Dr. M. Julius Hayes
Norfolk

Rev. Linda Harding
Strasburg

Rev. Marlon Haskell
Chicago Avenue Baptist Church
Richmond

VERMONT

Rev. David Hamilton
All Saints Church
South Burlington

WASHINGTON

Rabbi Jason Levine
Temple Beth Am
Seattle

Rev. Dr. Marie M. Fortune
FaithTrust Institute
Seattle

Rev. Laura Shennum
Cascade Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
East Wenatchee

Rev. Kathleen Bellefeuille-Rice
Holy Wisdom Inclusive Catholic Community
Olympia

Rev. Diane S. Whalen
Holy Wisdom Inclusive Catholic Community
Olympia

Rev. Peter Ilgenfritz
University Congregational United Church of Christ
Seattle

Rev. Kathianne Lewis
Center for Spiritual Living
Seattle

WISCONSIN

Cantor David Barash
Congregation Emanu-El B'ne Jeshurun
Milwaukee

Rabbi Bonnie Margulis
Wisconsin Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
Madison

Rev. Jack Frohn
Oshkosh

Rev. Tom Williams
Peace UCC
Whitefish Bay

Rev. Sarah Kerkes
Our Savior's Lutheran Church
Superior

Rev. Kimberly Stowel
Ripon

Sister Julie Tydrich
Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration
Onalaska

Sister Barbara Anne Gluck
Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis (SSJ-TOSF)
Kimberly

Rev. Dana Schindler
Hyland Lakes Parish
Elcho

interfaith coalition against domestic & sexual violence

JWI.ORG

Jewish Women International (JWI) is the leading Jewish organization working to end violence against women and girls. JWI's advocacy efforts focus on legislation that supports women and girls, ensures their economic security, and protects their right to live free from violence.

JWI is a steering committee member of NO MORE and the National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence Against Women, and a principal leader of the Coalition to End Violence Against Women and Girls Globally. Our education programs promote financial literacy for women of all ages, teach teens and college students to understand and create healthy relationships, and build women's leadership in their careers and communities. JWI also supports abuse survivors with resources to help rebuild their lives, and builds children's libraries in domestic violence shelters nationwide.

JWI convenes the **Interfaith Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence**, a group of 36 national faith organizations united to advocate for policies that prevent domestic and sexual violence and support survivors. As a national coalition representing millions of congregants and constituents from diverse religious communities, our moral, religious and ethical commitments guide our work in ending violence against women.

Recognizing that domestic violence survivors often turn to their religious leaders and houses of worship for support, guidance and refuge during times of abuse, Jewish Women International convened an innovative interfaith coalition in 2007 to unite the collective energies and visions of faith communities and advance federal domestic violence legislation. Today, the coalition also advocates for legislation that addresses sexual violence, international violence against women, human trafficking, and other issues.

COALITION MEMBERS

American Jewish World Service • ASHA for Women • Association of Jewish Family and Children Agencies • Catholics for Family Peace • Episcopal Church • Episcopal Diocese of Maryland • FaithTrust Institute • General Board of Church and Society • Hadassah • Hindu American Seva Charities • IMA World Health/We Will Speak Out • Islamic Relief USA • Islamic Social Services Association • Islamic Society of North America • Jewish Community Relations Council • Jewish Council for Public Affairs • Jewish Women International • Karamah: Muslim Women Lawyers for Human Rights • Church Women United • Muslim Public Affairs Council • National Advocacy Center of The Sisters of the Good Shepherd • National Council of Jewish Women • Peaceful Families Project of United Muslim Relief • Presbyterian Church General Assembly Council • Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism • Religious Institute • Safe Havens Interfaith Partnership Against Domestic Violence • Tahirih Justice Center • Sikh Coalition • Sikh Family Center • U.S. Baha'i Office of Public Affairs • Unitarian Universalist Association • United Church of Christ • United Methodist Women