



Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence  
**ACTION ALLIANCE**  
Virginia's leading voice on sexual and  
intimate partner violence  
[www.vsdvalliance.org](http://www.vsdvalliance.org)

## INCREASING VICTIM SAFETY BY REDUCING OFFENDER ACCESS TO FIREARMS

HB 1763, Sullivan :: SB 1078, Howell :: SB 1476, Saslaw :: HB 2399, Lopez

- Ensuring that those who pose a substantial risk of harm to self or others are prohibited from the sale, transfer, transport, or possession of firearms;
- Supporting the expansion of firearm prohibitions to those subject to permanent protective orders; and
- Developing effective implementation standards/procedures for the surrender and seizure of firearms from those who pose substantial risk of harm.

## OUR POSITION

Intimate partner homicide occurs at extraordinary rates in Virginia. And often, firearms are the means by which abusers escalate and enact lethal force on victims and their families. As Virginia's leading voice on sexual and domestic violence, the Action Alliance supports policies that enact measures to remove firearms from dangerous and potentially lethal situations in addition to policies that give law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and the courts additional tools to enforce measures that would protect victims, their families, and the broader community from harm.

## TALKING POINTS

- Most intimate partner homicides in Virginia are committed with the use of a firearm. In 2014, the Virginia Office of the Chief Medical Examiner reports that 64% of all intimate partner violence homicide victims were killed with a firearm. This is consistent with data from the Virginia Medical Examiner's 2010 report of a ten-year review of family and intimate partner homicide that revealed that 60.5% of all IPV homicide victims in Virginia were killed with a firearm.
- Firearms are also often used in non-fatal domestic violence. A study by Harvard School of Public Health analyzed gun use at home and concluded that "hostile gun displays against family members are more common than gun use in self-defense, and that hostile gun displays are often acts of domestic violence directed against women".
- In states like Virginia that simply allow police to confiscate firearms, logistical hurdles often prevent them from seizing firearms. A lack of adequate space for the storage of a potentially large number of guns and concerns over accountability – police departments fear being held liable if seized firearms end up lost or damaged – can deter police from confiscating firearms during domestic violence calls. It's time for Virginia to adopt an effective and thoughtful surrender and seizure process that works for law enforcement and victims.