



SUPPORT FOR SB 479 and HB 1004:

Addressing implementation and effective enforcement of firearm prohibitions in permanent protective order cases

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 and give law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and courts the additional tools required in order to effectively enforce measures to protect victims, their families, and the broader community.

We are asking the legislature to enact meaningful legislation that would expand firearm prohibitions to all permanent protective orders (Family Abuse and Acts of Violence) and support Virginia courts in adopting uniform practices in cases where respondent possession, transport, and purchase of firearms is prohibited.

Such a proposal would establish judicial mechanisms to:

- ✓ Provide petitioners with the ability to request firearms relief - including details on number of firearms, makes and models of firearms, and locations of firearms - in their protective order petition;
- ✓ Ensure that the courts notify respondents of firearm restrictions regarding family abuse protective orders and advise respondents on ways to dispose of firearms;
- ✓ Ensure that the courts direct the respondent to dispose of firearms with information on the time limit in which they are required to dispose and/or relinquish possession;
- ✓ Ensure that the courts have a process for respondents to certify that they have relinquished possession of their firearms;
- ✓ Recommend a process for the courts to follow up on disposition of firearms, including concealed carry permits issued by a circuit court;
- ✓ Establish a penalty for failure to comply with certification requirements set forth by the court (i.e. contempt of court).

Recent data from the Virginia Office of the Chief Medical Examiner indicate that 64% of all intimate partner violence homicide victims were killed with a firearm. **It is time for Virginia to adopt measures that provide courts, law enforcement, and prosecutors with the tools necessary to effectively implement protective orders and ensure victim safety across the Commonwealth.**