



Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence
ACTION ALLIANCE

Virginia's leading voice
on sexual and domestic violence
for over 30 years.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kate McCord, Action Alliance Communications Director, kmccord@vsdvalliance.org

APRIL 10, 2017

THE VIRGINIA SEXUAL AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACTION ALLIANCE APPLAUDS THE GOVERNOR'S VETO OF GUN BILLS PROPOSING DANGEROUS SOLUTIONS FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance, on behalf of domestic violence advocates across the Commonwealth, thanks Governor Terry McAuliffe for vetoing HB 1852 & HB 1853 (Del Gilbert) & SB 1299 & SB 1300 (Sen Vogel). These pieces of legislation would have further weakened the Commonwealth's gun safety laws and put domestic violence victims at greater risk.

The Action Alliance opposed the proposed bills because they perpetuated the dangerous fiction that guns in the hands of victims of domestic violence would prevent further violence. In fact, access to guns is the strongest risk factor for victims of domestic violence to be killed by an intimate partner.

"As someone who has looked down the barrel of a gun that was pointed at me by my husband and then shot three times, I can tell you that these concealed carry bills offer false solutions," says Lisette Johnson, a survivor of attempted homicide at the hands of her spouse.

"This legislation sends a dangerous message to victims of domestic violence: firearms will keep you safe," said Kristi VanAudenhove, Executive Director of the Action Alliance. VanAudenhove continues, "We are disheartened to see the NRA speaking on behalf of victims, rather than listening to the real experts in domestic violence, and that proponents of the legislation were not willing to work on reasonable amendments with us on addressing safety concerns raised by the bill."

The focus on arming victims is one of many outdated self-defense strategies that focus on changing the behavior of potential victims—usually women—to reduce their risk of violence, rather than focusing on preventing perpetration and holding offenders accountable. It is not the victims' responsibility to stop the violence.

The same General Assembly that seems intent on passing these bills - under the guise of protecting victims - has consistently rejected bills that would take guns away from people convicted of domestic violence; especially given that the evidence demonstrates the removal of firearms from the situation is the factor that saves lives.

- A woman is far more likely to be the victim of a handgun homicide than to use a handgun in a justifiable homicide. A study found that for every time a woman used a handgun to kill an intimate partner in self-defense, 83 women were murdered by an intimate partner with a handgun. Source: Violence Policy Center. (2001). *A Deadly Myth: Women, Handguns, and self-defense*. Washington, DC.

-more-

1118 W. Main Street
Richmond, VA 23220

Phone 804.377.0335
info@vsdvalliance.org
www.vsdvalliance.org
[@VActionAlliance](https://twitter.com/VActionAlliance)

Resources
Training
Data Collection
Public Policy
Prevention

Virginia Statewide Hotline
Voice: 1.800.838.8238
Text: 804.793.9999
Chat: www.vadata.org/chat

LGBTQ Partner Abuse &
Sexual Assault Helpline
Voice: 1.866.356.6998
Text: 804.793.9999
Chat: www.vadata.org/chat

- A 2003 study found that women who were murdered were more likely, not less likely, to have purchased a handgun in the three years prior to their deaths, in direct contradiction to the idea that a handgun has a protective effect against homicide. Source: Violence Policy Center (VPC) study When Men Murder Women: An Analysis of 2014 Homicide Data (September 2016).

“I’ve worked with women who are in prison because they killed their abuser in an act of self-defense, and they can tell you that this is a false solution, it has lasting impact, and that the state doesn’t defend these actions,” says Johnson.

Advocates know and witness in their work with victims that the presence of any firearm is dangerous and frightening for most victims and their families. VanAudenhove concluded, “On behalf of domestic violence victims advocates across the Commonwealth, thank you, Governor McAuliffe, for your continued leadership on promoting individual and public safety through commonsense gun laws, grounded in evidence-based practices.”

#

About the Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance

The Action Alliance has been Virginia’s leading voice on sexual and domestic violence for more than 30 years and enhances response and prevention efforts through training, public policy advocacy, public awareness programs, and technical assistance to professionals. www.vsdvalliance.org @VActionAlliance

1118 W. Main Street
Richmond, VA 23220

Phone 804.377.0335
info@vsdvalliance.org
www.vsdvalliance.org
[@VActionAlliance](https://twitter.com/VActionAlliance)

Resources
Training
Data Collection
Public Policy
Prevention

Virginia Statewide Hotline
Voice: 1.800.838.8238
Text: 804.793.9999
Chat: www.vadata.org/chat

LGBTQ Partner Abuse &
Sexual Assault Helpline
Voice: 1.866.356.6998
Text: 804.793.9999
Chat: www.vadata.org/chat