



Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence
ACTION ALLIANCE

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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VIRGINIA'S SEXUAL & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM ADVOCATES EXPRESS CONCERN OVER GUN BILLS

RICHMOND--Sexual and domestic violence victim advocates across Virginia descended on Virginia's General Assembly today for an annual Legislative Advocacy Day to educate lawmakers about a number of bills seeking to prevent sexual and domestic violence and/or ameliorate the effects of violence on survivors.

Many victim advocates across Virginia were disappointed to learn that Senator Vogel and Delegate Gilbert re-filed SB 1299 and HB 1852 and to learn of the subsequent passage of Senate Bill 1299 yesterday, despite opposition and serious concerns for victim safety raised by victim advocates.

SB 1299 and HB 1852 authorize any person 21 years of age or older who is not prohibited from purchasing, possessing, or transporting a firearm and is protected by an unexpired protective order to carry a concealed handgun for 45 days after the protective order is issued. This turns all protective orders into de-facto concealed carry permits.

Victim advocates oppose these bills because they pose risks to victims of domestic violence by inserting firearms into already dangerous and potentially lethal situations. "These proposals are not supported by evidence and will not keep victims safe", said Kristi VanAudenrove, Executive Director of the Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance, Virginia's leading voice on sexual and domestic violence.

No evidence supports the theory that introducing a firearm into volatile situations--where a history of domestic violence exists--makes victims and their families safer. On the contrary, the presence of a gun, regardless of who owns the gun, makes it five times more likely that a woman will be killed—in fact, gun access is the strongest risk factor for victims of domestic violence to be killed by an intimate partner¹.

Handguns have not been correlated with increased victim safety. 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 myth that a handgun has a protective effect against homicide².

The assumption and message that guns can prevent violence is not only dangerous but contradicts what we know about the dynamics of sexual and domestic violence, as well as prevention strategies. "We are disheartened to see legislators following direction on victim safety from the bill supporters, rather than listening to experts in domestic violence nor being willing to work with us on addressing safety concerns raised by the bill," remarked VanAudenrove.

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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

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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

¹Testimony before US Senate July 30, 2014 Jacquelyn Campbell, PhD, RN, FAAN, Anna D. Wolf Chair and Professor Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing
²Violence Policy Center (VPC) study When Men Murder Women: An Analysis of 2014 Homicide Data (September 2016)