

**H.R. 6088/S. 1515:**

# *Domestic Violence Lies Cost Lives*

The National Domestic Violence Volunteer Attorney Network Act -- H.R. 6088 and S. 1515 -- was recently introduced in Congress. The bill would authorize \$55 million for volunteer lawyers to help victims of domestic violence.

Unfortunately, the \$55 million is earmarked for an industry that traffics in myths, half-truths, and make-believe statistics.

*These myths have deadly consequences.*

## **Myth #1: Women who are violent are only acting in self-defense.**

A recent study by the Centers for Disease Control found women initiate 71% of one-way partner violence.<sup>i</sup> But the domestic violence industry scorns any mention that women may be violence-prone.

So when an abusive woman needs help, the system ignores her desperate pleas:

*Sheila LaBarre of New Hampshire was recently sentenced to life in prison without parole for the brutal killing of two ex-boyfriends. LaBarre had a long-standing history of domestic violence, including stabbing another boyfriend in the head with scissors.*

*Persons believe officials would have intervened sooner if the perpetrator had been a man.*

*“How many people would have been saved? And maybe even LaBarre would have been saved from having to spend her life in prison?” asks abuse expert Lee Newman.*

## **Myth #2: ‘Get-tough’ arrest policies save lives**

The Violence Against Women Act has spent millions of taxpayer dollars to institute pro- and mandatory-arrest policies. These policies set aside due process protections of “probable

cause,” and silence the wishes of victims, as well.

Worse, VAWA-funded mandatory arrest laws have increased partner homicides by 54%, according to a recent Harvard University study.<sup>ii</sup>

*“Mandatory arrest laws are responsible for an additional 0.8 murders per 100,000 people.” – Radha Iyengar, PhD*

## **Myth #3: Aggressive prosecution of minor infractions helps victims**

Many states have laws that mandate prosecution for a restraining order violation. But these policies do more harm than good.

One study concluded, “Increases in the willingness of prosecutors’ offices to take cases of protection order violation were associated with increases in the homicide of white married intimates, black unmarried intimates, and white unmarried females.”<sup>iii</sup>

## **Unfolding Scandal at Florida Abuse Shelters**

Reports of illegal and harmful activities in Florida abuse shelters have emerged in recent months:

- At the *SafeSpace Shelter* in Stuart, Fla., Marilyn Hooks stabbed and killed co-resident Milaus Almore.
- At *Another Way* in Lake City, a 4-year-old girl was sexually molested by a 9-year-old female staying at the shelter. Then shelter staff told the mother she couldn’t report the assault to the police.
- At the *Naples Shelter for Abused Women and Children*, director Kathy Catino was

forced to resign after assaulting an employee.

Despite repeated requests, the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence has stayed mum about these abuses.

### **Women Say, “Fix VAWA Now!”**

Women increasingly see domestic violence programs as ineffective and harmful:

- “We have no evidence to date that VAWA has led to a decrease in the overall levels of violence against women.” —Angela Moore Parmley, PhD, Department of Justice
- “At worst, the criminal justice system increases violence against women. At best, it has little or no effect.” -- New York University vice provost Linda Mills, PhD

Women who have seen the truth of VAWA-funded programs are demanding, “Fix VAWA Now!”

### **More Myths from the ABA**

H.R. 6088/S. 1515 earmarks \$14 million for the ABA Commission on Domestic Violence and allocates another \$41 million that is subject to its direct influence. But the CODV has come under fire for misrepresenting the truth.

According to a recent RADAR report, *Myths of the ABA Commission on Domestic Violence: Summary Report*, the CODV has published a flyer that lends the “imprimatur of legitimacy to numerous falsehoods about domestic violence, child abuse, and custody.”<sup>iv</sup>

### **When Representatives of the DV Industry Come Calling...**

These are some questions to ask representatives of the domestic violence industry when they come knocking on your door:

1. The DoJ National Violence Against Women Survey found men represent 40% of abuse victims. Other studies show domestic violence is a 50-50 proposition. So why are you telling me only half the story?
2. Why are you only giving me crime statistics, which are known to underreport and distort the true extent of the domestic violence problem?

3. CDC researcher Daniel Whitaker wrote, “a woman’s perpetration of violence was the strongest predictor of her being a victim of partner violence.” If we care about protecting women, why aren’t we concerned about female-perpetrated abuse?

### **H.R. 6088: Subsidizing a System Gone Off the Rails**

The federal government already spends \$1 billion a year for domestic violence programs that are ineffective and harm the victims of violence.

The federal government needs to do something about domestic violence, but H.R. 6088 will only make things worse. H.R. 6088 is not what taxpayers want, and not what victims of violence need. Say “No!” to H.R. 6088.



**Respecting Accuracy in Domestic Abuse Reporting**

*A coalition of over 100 organizations is working to educate the public about the need to reform our domestic violence laws: [www.mediaradar.org/docs/VAWA-Reform-Coalition-Declaration.pdf](http://www.mediaradar.org/docs/VAWA-Reform-Coalition-Declaration.pdf)*

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Internet : [www.mediaradar.org](http://www.mediaradar.org)*

### **References**

- <sup>i</sup> Whitaker DJ, Haileyesus T, Swahn M, Saltzman L. Differences in frequency of violence and reported injury between relationships with reciprocal and nonreciprocal intimate partner violence. *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 97, No. 5, 2007.
- <sup>ii</sup> Iyengar R. Does the certainty of arrest reduce domestic violence? Evidence from mandatory and recommended arrest laws. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, June 2007.
- <sup>iii</sup> Dugan L, Nagin D, and Rosenfeld R. Exposure reduction or backlash? The effects of domestic violence resources on intimate partner homicide. NCJ Number 186194. 2001.
- <sup>iv</sup> <http://www.mediaradar.org/docs/RADARreport-Myths-of-ABA-Commission-on-DV-Summary.pdf>