



via eMail

January 18, 2017

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

A Woman's Place
AAUW Doylestown Branch
AAUW Levittown-Lower Bucks Branch
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Bucks County
Bucks County Area Agency on Aging
Bucks County Commissioners' Advisory Council for Women
Bucks County Drug and Alcohol Commission, Inc.
Bucks County Housing Group
Bucks County Intermediate Unit #22
Bucks County Opportunity Council
Bucks County WIB, Inc.
BuxMont Unitarian Universalist Peace and Justice Committee
Child, Home & Community
Delaware Valley Association for the Education of Young Children
Family Service Association of Bucks County
Habitat for Humanity of Bucks County
Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania
Interfaith Community of Lower Bucks
Keystone Progress
Latino Leadership Alliance of Bucks County
LaVO Design
League of Women Voters of Bucks County
Libertae
Makefield Area Action Fund of AAUW
Maternity Care Coalition
NAACP, Bucks County Branch
National Council of Jewish Women – PA
Network of Victim Assistance PathWays PA
Planned Parenthood Keystone
Public Citizens for Children and Youth
Quality Child Care Coalition of Bucks County
Sircely Marketing & Design
Soroptmist International of Bucks County
The Council of Southeast Pennsylvania
The Peace Center
Women's Center of Montgomery County
YWCA Bucks County

PARTNER INDIVIDUALS

More Than 150 Individual Partners and Growing

Dear Senators McIlhinney, Greenleaf, Tomlinson, Mensch:

BCWAC and its partners implore you to cosponsor Senator Tom Killion's bill that aims to "enhance safety" for parties involved in domestic abuse cases and Protection From Abuse (PFA) orders. This past November a Joint State Government Commission recommended discontinuing the option of third-party safekeeping of firearms, identifying it as one of the "blind spots" in Pennsylvania's PFA laws.

Killion's bill would also force defendants convicted of a misdemeanor domestic violence crime to give their guns up within 24 hours instead of the current requirement of 60 days.

The language of the bill was carefully negotiated by the PA Coalition Against Domestic Violence with various law enforcement agencies and gun ownership organizations.

Statistics and recommendations from scholarly sources support Killion's proposed change.

According to the Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, guns pose a particular threat in the hands of Domestic Abusers:

- Abused women are five times more likely to be killed by their abuser if the abuser owns a firearm
- Domestic violence assaults involving a gun are 12 times more likely to result in death than those involving other weapons or bodily force
- More than two-thirds of spouse and ex-spouse homicide victims between 1980 and 2008 were killed with firearms
- In 2011, nearly two-thirds of women killed by guns were killed by their intimate partners

Peg Dierkers, executive director of the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence, stated that the current law allows for abusers to use the "easy" access to their guns via the third party — or the threat of that easy access — to "continue to abuse and control the victim."

Please protect the women and children of your state with your support of this common sense clarification to an already existing law. Require the judge or sheriff to confiscate the abuser's or accused abuser's gun within 24 hours. You have an important ethical decision: Whose right is weightier? That of innocent children and women to be protected from homicide violence and death or the unfettered right to own weapons with no accountability? We trust that you will choose to side the victims of domestic violence and cosponsor Senator Killion's bill.

BCWAC President

Firearm Safety Specialist