

VAWA REAUTHORIZATION: PREVENTING FIREARM RELATED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOMICIDE

YWCA provided legal intervention for a mother and her children when her husband became homicidal. After living separately and needing to take added precautions each time the mother and children returned home (to ensure the estranged husband was not on the property), they got out of the car to find him hiding in the bushes with a gun. Ultimately, legal resources were utilized and the family was able to live free from fear. Years later, her daughter, remembering the impact of having individuals to advocate for their family, opted to go to law school and is now an attorney for YWCA, representing victims of domestic violence in peace and protective orders.

YWCA is committed to ensuring that communities are safe places for women and girls to thrive. As the largest network of domestic and sexual violence service providers in the country, helping 535,000 women, girls, and family members each year, we see gun violence as a major threat to their health and safety.

Women's experiences of gun violence are inextricably linked to domestic violence.

- Some 4.5 million women in the U.S. have been threatened with a gun by an intimate partner, and nearly 1 million women alive today have been shot, or shot at, by an intimate partner.
- In an average month, 50 women in the U.S. are shot to death by intimate partners, and many more are injured.
- The presence of a gun in a domestic violence situation makes it five times more likely that a woman will be killed.
- States with laws that prohibit people with domestic violence restraining orders from possessing a gun have a 14% lower rate of intimate partner homicide by firearm.

YWCA USA POSITION

For 25 years, federal law has protected women whose intimate partner has been convicted from obtaining a firearm. **YWCA USA endorses H.R. 1620, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2021.** H.R. 1620 would:

- Keep guns out of the hands of perpetrators of domestic violence, stalking, and other interpersonal violence;
- Close a loophole to prohibit those who are convicted of dating violence and stalking from obtaining a firearm;
- Notify local law enforcement when a prohibited person fails a background check since this could indicate an escalation in violence;
- Ensure all abusers relinquish firearms once prohibited; and
- Clarify that all local/municipal laws that prohibit abusers from possessing firearms are treated like federal, state, and tribal laws.