



LOUISIANA MOVES TO RESTRICT ABUSERS' ACCESS TO FIREARMS

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Baton Rouge, LA – April 3, 2014 – On Thursday, three domestic violence bills, sponsored by Representative Helena Moreno, cleared their second legislative hurdle, passing in the House of Representatives unanimously.

HB 753, restricting access to firearms by domestic violence offenders, did not only pass unanimously. It also saw 54 legislators sign on as co-authors, 22 Republicans and 31 Democrats, a huge feat in a state widely considered to have the strongest protections for gun owners in the nation.

The package of bills also strengthens protective orders and amends the crime of domestic abuse battery.

Earlier in the week, two bills by Senator JP Morrell that allow domestic abuse victims to waive the divorce waiting period and seek exemplary damages in lawsuits against their abusers passed the full Senate, also unanimously.

Louisiana consistently leads the nation in domestic homicides. The Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence tracks these homicides and says from 2010 through 2012 there were 178 deaths due to domestic violence. 74% of these were committed with firearms and 37% of the offenders had a prior history of domestic violence or other violent crimes. There were 16 multiple victim incidents resulting in 35 deaths, practically all of which were committed with firearms. The murder rate of women in Louisiana has been as much as twice the national average in recent years.

Beth Meeks, Executive Director of LCADV, believes the passage of these bills goes a long way in reducing these homicides. "This is a huge first step toward solving the problem. We have more to do, like increase the safety net for victims, but today proves that safe families are a bipartisan priority for Louisiana. We are immensely grateful for the legislators who were brave enough to take this issue on. "

House bills 747, 750, and 753 by Rep. Moreno will be heard by the Senate later this month. Senate bills 291 and 292 by Sen. Morrell will be heard by the House. The Coalition expects a strong presence from advocates, domestic violence survivors, and community members throughout the process. "People are really tired of losing their friends and families to these senseless homicides. The support has been overwhelming and we expect it to continue to be strong." said Meeks.

For additional information on domestic violence, and to learn ways to get involved, visit www.lcadv.org.

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The Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence (LCADV) is a state wide network of battered women's programs, other organizations and individuals who share the goal of ending violence against women and children in Louisiana. LCADV empowers its members through advocacy, education, resource development and technical assistance.