



## Louisiana Remains Among Deadliest States for Women

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**Baton Rouge, LA** – The Washington, D.C. based Violence Policy Center has issued its annual report on female murder victims, and it once again paints a grim picture for Louisiana. The report, ***When Men Murder Women: An Analysis of Homicide Data***, reviews female victims killed by male offenders in single victim/single offender incidents and ranks all states from highest rates to lowest. The 2017 report, which analyzed homicides committed in 2015, was released this week. Louisiana ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> in the nation, down from 2<sup>nd</sup> the year before.

The report reveals that nationwide more than 1,680 women were murdered by men in 2015, and the most common weapon used was a gun. 93% of women killed by men were murdered by someone they knew. The report also shows that black women were disproportionately victimized, with black females being murdered by males at a rate more than twice as high as white females: 2.43 per 100,000 versus 0.96 per 100,000. The report does not count multiple death incidents or incidents where the perpetrator and victim are the same gender.

This is the 20<sup>th</sup> year that the Violence Policy Center has published *When Men Murder Women*. From 1996 to 2015, the rate of women murdered by men in single victim/single offender incidents nationwide dropped from 1.57 per 100,000 women in 1996 to 1.12 per 100,000 women in 2015, a decrease of 29%. However, a review of the report reveals that Louisiana has failed to make the progress seen in the rest of the nation. The rate in Louisiana remains 2.22 per 100,000, double the national average, and 41% higher than the national average was 20 years ago when the reporting began.

Mariah Wineski, executive director of the Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence, says there are a number of factors that contribute to Louisiana's high homicide rate. One factor is inadequate funding for victim services. "Domestic violence programs across the state are stretched dangerously thin. Without additional resources, there simply are not enough shelter beds to meet the needs of victims seeking immediate safety." Another factor, Wineski says, is easy firearm access for abusers. "Although state and federal law prohibit many abusers from possessing firearms, our state lacks any consistent process for actually implementing these prohibitions. This means many people convicted of domestic abuse battery - and therefore prohibited from possessing a firearm - nonetheless retain access to their guns." Of the women killed by men in Louisiana in 2015, 64% were killed with guns.

Though they expressed frustration with the state's ranking, advocates are hopeful that change is possible. "This report should be a wake-up call for Louisiana policymakers," Wineski said. "We are facing a homicide rate of epidemic proportions." The report shows that the rate of women murdered by men in Louisiana has increased steadily each year from 2011 (1.67 per 100,000) to 2015 (2.22 per 100,000). "We can't afford to continue on this path. It is time for our state to prioritize women's lives."

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*The Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence (LCADV) is a statewide network of programs, organizations, and individuals who share the goal of ending domestic violence in Louisiana. LCADV empowers its members and communities through advocacy, education, resource development, and technical assistance. LCADV is dedicated to bringing about change in our institutions, laws, politics, attitudes, and beliefs which will allow individuals to live free of violence. For more information, visit [www.lcadv.org](http://www.lcadv.org).*