

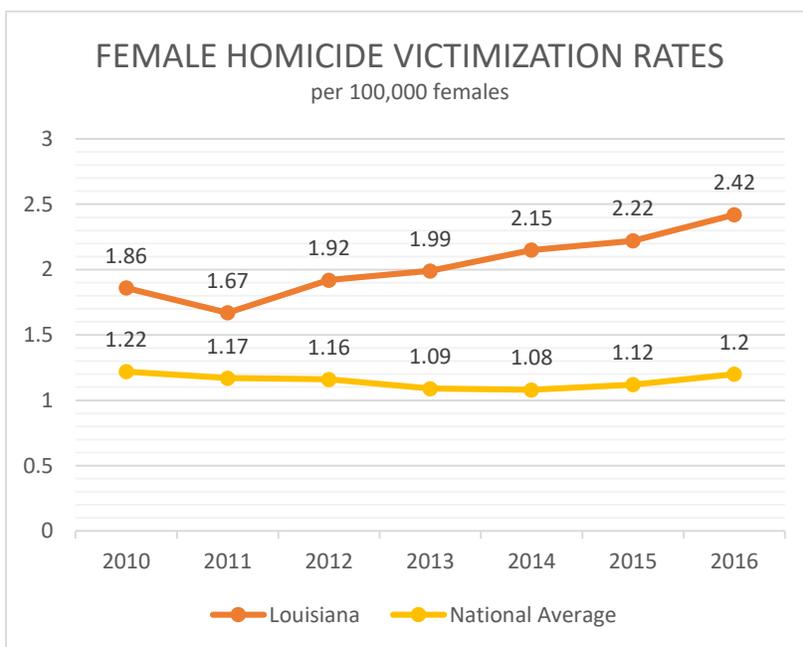


## Rate of Women Murdered in Louisiana Increases for 5<sup>th</sup> Consecutive Year

For Immediate Release: September 18, 2018  
Media Contact: Mariah Wineski, (225) 752-1296

**Baton Rouge, LA** – The Washington, D.C. based Violence Policy Center has issued its annual report on female murder victims, and it shows a troubling trend in 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 2018 report, which analyzed homicides committed in 2016, was released this week. Louisiana ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> in the nation, up from 3<sup>rd</sup> the year before. The report also reveals that Louisiana’s rate of women murdered by men has increased steadily for the past five consecutive years, with the most recent rate being 2.42 homicides per 100,000 females.

Mariah Wineski, executive director of the Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence, said this upward trend should alarm Louisianans. “We are deeply concerned that women in Louisiana continue to be killed at a rate twice the national average. Behind each of these numbers is a woman whose life was cut short, in most cases by a current or former intimate partner.”



Wineski said there are a number of factors that contribute to Louisiana’s high domestic homicide rate, including inadequate funding for victim services, criminal justice practices that fail to prioritize victim safety, and abusers’ easy access to firearms. “Domestic violence programs across our state work tirelessly to promote the safety of people experiencing domestic violence, but they are only one piece of the puzzle,” said Wineski. “If we are serious about preventing domestic homicides, every entity in our state has a role to play.”

Of the women killed by men in Louisiana in 2016, 69% were killed with firearms. Advocates are hopeful that recently enacted legislation requiring the transfer of firearms from convicted abusers and those with qualifying protection orders will have an impact on these numbers. Senate Bill 231 of the 2018 regular legislative session requires sheriffs to oversee a process of transferring firearms from those legally unable to possess them.

“Louisiana has made steady progress over the past several years. We’ve established state-level firearm prohibitions, as well as a mechanism for securing transfer of the firearms. However, it can take years for legislative changes to be fully implemented in local communities,” Wineski said. Pursuant to Senate Bill 231, Jurisdictions are required to have processes in place to facilitate firearm transfer by January 1, 2019.

This is the 21<sup>st</sup> year that the Violence Policy Center has published *When Men Murder Women*. From 1996 to 2016, 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 1.20 per 100,000 women in 2016, a decrease of 24 percent. However, a review of the report reveals that Louisiana has failed to make the progress seen in the rest of the nation. The report also shows that black women were disproportionately victimized nationwide, with black females being murdered by males at a rate more than twice as high as white females: 2.62 per 100,000 versus 1.03 per 100,000. The report does not count multiple death incidents or incidents where the perpetrator and victim are of the same sex.

The release of the report coincides with Domestic Violence Awareness Month, which takes place each year in October. According to advocates, however, awareness is only the beginning. “Louisiana clearly has work to do,” Wineski said. “There is a cultural shift that must occur if we want to see real progress toward preventing homicides. It is time for our state’s priorities to reflect our true values of safety, equality, and freedom from violence.”

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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).*