



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Scott W. Murray
District of New Hampshire

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, October 14, 2020
<http://www.justice.gov/usao/nh/>
https://twitter.com/USAO_NH
Press Release Number: 20-132

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U.S. ATTORNEY MURRAY MARKS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH BY HIGHLIGHTING FEDERAL LAW THAT PROHIBITS DOMESTIC ABUSERS FROM POSSESSING GUNS

CONCORD – United States Attorney Scott W. Murray is commemorating Domestic Violence Awareness Month with an important reminder about the federal law that prohibits domestic abusers from possessing guns.

Under federal law, individuals with domestic violence misdemeanor and felony convictions, as well as individuals subject to domestic violence protective orders, are prohibited from possessing firearms. Those who possess firearms in violation of that prohibition face felony prosecution and the imposition of federal prison sentences.

Offenders with domestic violence in their past pose a high risk of committing homicides. In fact, domestic violence abusers with a gun in the home are five times more likely to kill their partners. Nearly half of female homicide victims in the United States are killed by a current or former male intimate partner.

In New Hampshire, homicides are often closely associated with domestic violence. Between 2009 and 2015, 58 percent of the homicides in the Granite State were linked with domestic violence. Keeping firearms out of the hands of domestic abusers can save lives. Prevention of domestic abuse is even more critical in light of the pressures placed upon families and individuals by COVID-19.

In an effort to raise awareness about these important laws and to improve coordination, the staff of the U.S. Attorney's Office plans to meet with local police and prosecutors who handle domestic violence cases to provide them with additional information about federal firearms prohibitions. The office also will be sending information to local police departments to remind them about these important federal laws.

"Domestic violence destroys family life, scars victims and permanently damages the health and wellbeing of survivors." said U.S. Attorney Murray. "Domestic abusers often escalate the level of violence they direct at victims and the availability of firearms enhances the risk of fatal injury. In order to reduce this risk, we are working closely with the ATF and all of our law enforcement partners to ensure that those involved in domestic violence do not gain

access to firearms. We will not hesitate to bring federal criminal charges against domestic abusers who violate federal law by possessing or seeking to obtain firearms.”

“Domestic violence, more than any other crime, represents a heightened risk for escalated and lethal violence,” said Amanda Grady Sexton, Director of Public Affairs for the Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence. “This is evident in the fact that domestic violence is the most deadly crime in New Hampshire. As experts we know that firearms are the most common weapon abusers use against their victims, and over the last two years firearms were the main cause of domestic violence homicides in our state. The data is undeniable; an abuser’s access to a firearm can be a death sentence for a victim.”

“Domestic violence with the threat or use of a firearm is something we take very seriously,” said Kelly D. Brady, Special Agent in Charge of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Boston Field Division. “ATF will continue to partner with the U.S. Attorney’s Office and our local, state and federal partners to arrest and prosecute the individuals who commit these violent acts.”

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