

## What We Know

### Stalking behavior predicts lethality.

•76% of female homicide victims had been stalked by their murderer in the year prior to their murder.

### Stalking victims need help to be safe.

•54% of female homicide victims reported stalking to police before they were killed by their stalker.

Source: McFarlane et al. "Stalking and Intimate Partner Femicide," *Homicide Studies*, Sage Publications.

## Stalking Facts

### **Stalking is accompanied and reinforced by other types of violence against women.**

- 81% of women who were stalked by a current or former intimate partner were also physically assaulted; 31% were also sexually assaulted by that partner.
- 69% of female stalking victims with protective orders had their protective orders violated.

### **Stalking impacts the victim and the community.**

- 30% of female victims sought psychological counseling; 26% of victims lost time from work and 7% never returned to work because of stalking.
- Average duration of stalking behavior by a current or former intimate partner is 2.2 years.

### **Stalking does not cease without intervention.**

- Top three reasons victims thought stalking ended:
  1. Victim relocated
  2. Stalker got a new love interest
  3. Police warned stalker

Source: Tjaden, Patricia and Nancy Thoennes. *Stalking in America: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey*. U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, Washington, DC. 1998.

## Save Lives: Strengthen Anti-Stalking Laws



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## What We Can Do

### Proposed improvements to the WV anti-stalking law will:

- Increase victim and public safety.
- Clarify the law to increase identification of and response to stalking behavior.
- Strengthen penalties to reflect the seriousness of the crime.
- Provide tools for the court system to hold perpetrators accountable.

## Support Proposed Changes to Strengthen the WV Anti-Stalking Law

- Eliminate the relationship requirement: it will not be necessary for a stalker to have a relationship or seek to establish a personal or social relationship with another person in order to apply the anti-stalking law.
- Revise penalties to reflect the seriousness of stalking. Enforce felony violations for the **most serious and lethal** stalking behavior when:
  - ✓ stalking is accompanied by a credible threat
  - ✓ the stalker is armed with a deadly weapon
  - ✓ stalking occurs in violation of a protection order
- Include rule promulgation to improve law enforcement response to stalking.

**1 of every 12 West Virginia women will be stalked in their lifetime...it's time to act.**

