

# CLOSE THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LOOPHOLE



## A GUN RAISES THE STAKES

- 4.5 million women in the United States report that an intimate partner has threatened them with a gun.<sup>1</sup>
- A woman in an abusive relationship is five times as likely to be killed if her abuser has access to a gun.<sup>2</sup>
- Each month, an average of 76 women in the U.S. are shot and killed by an intimate partner.<sup>3</sup>
- People even use unloaded guns to intimidate, threaten, or cause psychological harm to their partners.<sup>4</sup>

## THE PAST SPEAKS VOLUMES

The single greatest predictor of violent acts is a history of violent or aggressive acts, including domestic violence.<sup>5</sup>

A woman who has been assaulted with or threatened with a gun or other weapon is 20 times as likely to be murdered as other women.<sup>6</sup>

In more than two-thirds of mass shootings between 2014 and 2019, the shooter either killed a family member or partner or had a history of domestic violence.<sup>7</sup>

## WISCONSIN'S DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROBLEM

- Wisconsin ranks 8th in the country in the number of women murdered by men.<sup>8</sup>
- Between 2000 and 2020, there was a 62% increase in intimate partner homicides in Wisconsin.<sup>9</sup>
- More domestic violence-related homicides are committed with guns than all other methods combined.<sup>10</sup>
- In 2022 and 2023, End Abuse Wisconsin recorded the highest and second-highest numbers of domestic violence homicides ever, respectively, since they began tracking these homicides in the state in 2000.<sup>11</sup>
- Firearms were the weapons used in 78% of domestic violence deaths in WI in 2023.<sup>11</sup>

## WOMEN AREN'T SAFER WITH GUNS

- Women who purchase guns are more -- not less -- likely to die by firearm homicide.<sup>12, 13</sup>
- Women are far more likely to be killed by an intimate partner than by anyone else.<sup>14</sup>
- Women are nearly three times as likely to be the victims of homicide, if they live in a home with a gun.<sup>15</sup>

## A DANGEROUS GAP IN WISCONSIN LAW

If someone is convicted of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence, federal law prohibits them from possessing a firearm. Wisconsin, however, does not have a domestic violence misdemeanor law.

Instead, a person in Wisconsin who committed an act of domestic violence is charged under a different state statute, such as disorderly conduct. Unfortunately, in 2022, the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled that these other convictions do not disqualify people from owning a gun under the federal law.<sup>16</sup>

**That means that a person in Wisconsin convicted of another crime, like disorderly conduct – even when the crime was clearly an act of domestic violence – is not prohibited from purchasing or possessing a firearm or acquiring a concealed carry permit. Our legislature must act quickly to close this deadly loophole.**

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