



NATIONAL NETWORK
TO END DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE

1400 16TH STREET NW
SUITE 330
WASHINGTON, DC 20036

www.nnedv.org
phone: 202.543.5566
fax: 202.543.5626

U. S. Sentencing Commission
Testimony of Paulette Sullivan Moore
National Network to End Domestic Violence
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Introduction

Thank you Chair Saris, Vice Chairs Hinojosa, Jackson, Breyer, Commissioners Friedrich, Barkow, Pryor, Fulwood, Wroblewski, and staff of the U.S. Sentencing Commission for providing this opportunity for the voices of victims of domestic violence to help inform these deliberations. My name is Paulette Sullivan Moore. I serve as Vice President of Public Policy of the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV).

NNEDV is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization founded in 1994 to help craft solutions for ending all forms—physical, emotional and financial—of domestic violence. In conjunction with critical corporate partners like Allstate, the incredible advocacy of our 56 State and Territorial Domestic Violence and dual Domestic Violence-Sexual Assault Coalitions and the valiant work of the 2,300 local victim services programs, NNEDV works to advance the safety, security and economic stability of millions of women, men and children who are abused by those who purport to love them. NNEDV, also, in partnership with other Steering Committee members of the National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence (NTF), other national organizations and committed Senate and House staffers, helped draft and worked to promote initial passage and subsequent reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Acts (VAWA) of 1994, 2000, 2005 and 2013.

VAWA 2013 (the Act) triggered statutory changes to Titles 8, 18 and 47 of the United States Code. These statutory changes impact the crimes of assault (including sexual assault and aggravated sexual assault as well as strangulation and suffocation), offenses committed in Indian Country, domestic violence, stalking, international marriage brokers, obscene or harassing telephone calls, transportation of minors, and unlawful conduct with respect to immigration documents (including fraud in labor contracting and bringing in and harboring certain aliens). In regard to this testimony, and with respect for the expertise of our national partners, NNEDV will focus its testimony on what we have learned from domestic violence victims about how their safety and stability needs can be met through the process of offender sentencing.

Victims' Voices Regarding Sentencing

For purposes of this discussion, the term domestic violence is used, not in the broader context of *family violence*, but more specifically to describe an array of unlawful civil and criminal acts

perpetrated by one intimate partner against the other. These unlawful civil and criminal acts can be experienced by any member of our society, without regard to age, occupation, level of affluence or influence, race, ethnicity, income level, faith preference, gender identification or sexual orientation. The vast majority of domestic violence victims are women who are victimized by their male partners. Additionally, as a result of their over-representation in the victim category, research and anecdotal accounts primarily capture the voices of female victims of domestic violence.

Domestic violence victims desire sentencing for offenders that:

- (1) interrupts an offender's ability to perpetuate violence against them;
- (2) provides a period of time for victims to focus on their (and very often their children's) security, well-being, and forward movement;
- (3) requires appropriate pre- and post-release certified domestic violence batterers' intervention programming and activities designed to eliminate offenders' domestic abuse;
- (4) offers additional offender support (psychiatric treatment, employment and job entry skills and opportunities, drug and alcohol counseling, etc.);
- (5) conditions early release and good time credits upon successful completion of certified domestic violence batterers' intervention programming and other activities designed to eliminate offender's domestic abuse;
- (6) provides offenders with pre-release domestic violence programming and screening for every re-entry candidate to ensure that an offender's release does not place a former or current partner at risk for new or renewed acts of domestic violence (this is especially true in those instances where a former or current partner is pressured by either the offender or the correction's system to house the released offender);
- (7) structures post-release requirements that closely monitor and swiftly penalize domestic violence violations as forcefully as every other important condition of release; and
- (8) adheres to a protocol that compels both the released offender and the post-release professionals to place the burden of eliminating victim "complaints" against the offender on the offender.

Finally, in addition to conveying how offender sentencing can enhance victim safety and stability, domestic violence victims would also urge that the Commission seek solutions to victims' domestic violence related criminalization.

I look forward to expounding upon victims' concerns during the period of public testimony.

Respectfully,



Paulette Sullivan Moore
Vice President of Public Policy