



- **I support closing the Boyfriend Loophole.** Federal law prohibits the purchase and possession of firearms by convicted abusers, however, due to the federal definition of “domestic abuse”, this prohibition does not take effect if the couple was not married and has no children together. The majority (90+%) of women murdered are murdered by someone they know, and firearms are the most common weapon used. Given these statistics, closing the Boyfriend Loophole is crucial to protecting victims of abuse from further harm.

- **I support prohibiting the possession of firearms for people who have any protective order placed against them.** Current federal law prohibits individuals from buying or possessing firearms if a “final protective order” has been issued against them. However, there is no prohibition on firearms for those who have temporary protection orders placed against them. There is currently a bill in the Senate (S.2044) that aims to close this loophole, but it has yet to become law. This particular bill is named the “Lori Jackson Domestic Violence Survivor Protection Act” after a Connecticut woman who was shot and killed the day before a hearing that would have required her estranged husband to relinquish his firearms.

- **I would propose a national version of the Defending Childhood Initiative.** The best way to fight domestic abuse is to prevent it from happening in the first place. In 2010, Attorney General Eric Holder launched the Defending Childhood Initiative as a pilot program in eight US cities. The focus of this program was to provide services and counseling to children who had been exposed to violence or abuse in order to mitigate its effects and spread awareness about the problem. A 137-page report on the outcomes of the program is available through the National Criminal Justice Reference Service. Using the lessons learned and recommendations from this report, a national version of this prevention program should be developed.



- **I would propose allocating national resources for programs such as the CDC's "Coaching Boys into Men" program.** The Coaching Boys into Men program was a CDC funded, three-year test program (ending in 2012) that took place in sixteen high schools in Sacramento, CA. This program consisted of curriculum designed to discourage violence against women and girls, and the results were extremely promising. Students who participated in this program were found to be more likely to report domestic violence, more likely to intervene, and less likely to perpetrate domestic violence. Modeling a national program based on the success of the CBIM program and/or providing grants or other resources for similar programs could be effective ways to reduce domestic violence rates.

- **I would increase VAWA funding for victim support services and for response training for police officers and family court judges.** The 1994 Violence Against Women Act (subsequently reauthorized in 2000, 2005, and 2013) was a comprehensive act that focused on preventing sexual assault and domestic violence, funding victims services, funding community crime prevention efforts, the training of law enforcement and other officials, the creation of the first federal anti-battery law. Increasing VAWA funds and resources could potentially increase the impact and effectiveness of this act. Additionally, increasing and improving the training that police officers and family judges receive could improve their ability to adequately respond to and handle situations involving domestic violence.