



To: The Nevada Commission For Women
From: The Nevada Network Against Domestic Violence

October 11, 2016

Chairwoman Cafferata and Members of the Nevada Commission For Women:

Thank you for accepting testimony on the important issue of what women need to successfully join the workforce and take care of their families in Nevada. The Nevada Network Against Domestic Violence (NNADV) is the statewide coalition representing frontline organizations that support victims of domestic and sexual violence and their children throughout Nevada. Women experiencing violence face a variety of barriers when joining or maintaining their place in the workplace. NNADV would like you to consider this when addressing workplace security for women and all victims of domestic and sexual violence. Domestic and sexual violence can and do occur independently of each other, but it is important to note that 25% of sexual assaults are committed by an intimate partner¹.

One of the greatest challenges victims of domestic violence face is the economic dependence they have on their abuser. 98% of victims have indicated that this financial dependency was a main reason for staying in an abusive relationship². An abuser often intentionally forces a victim to become financially dependent by forbidding the victim from working and taking control of all finances. Leaving an abuser can force a victim into a situation where they will face poverty and destitution with their children. Even when a victim is employed, abusers can use the justice system as a tactic to force victims to miss work and constantly attend court. This can jeopardize the victim's employment³. This is also true for victims of sexual violence. An additional role employment plays for victims of domestic violence is safety in the workplace. Abusers can threaten victims at their place of employment and create safety concerns for the workplace. While Nevada law does allow workplaces to file for protection orders, this is not always the safest solution. Filing a protection order against the wishes of a victim can create an even more dangerous situation by exacerbating the violence.

A 2005 telephone survey of 1,200 full-time employees found that 44% had personally experienced domestic violence impacting their workplace⁴. A 2006 study issued by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, found that almost one in four large private industries reported at least one domestic violence incidence, including threats and assaults, over the past year⁵. There is a fatality component to this as well. Women face a much higher risk of on-the-job intimate partner homicide. Between 1997-2009 intimate partners committed on-the-job homicides of 321 women and 38 men⁶.

¹ <https://rainn.org/get-information/statistics/sexual-assault-offenders>

² <http://nnevad.org/resources/ejresources/about-financial-abuse.html>

³ http://www.vawnet.org/applied-research-papers/print-document.php?doc_id=2187

⁴ *CAEPV National Benchmark Telephone Survey*. 2005. Bloomington, IL: Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence. Available at: http://www.caepv.org/getinfo/facts_stats.php?factsec=3 as cited in <http://www.workplacesrespond.org/learn/the-facts/the-facts-on-the-workplace-and-domestic-violence>

⁵ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2006. *Survey of Workplace Violence Prevention*, 2005. Washington, DC. Available at: <http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/osnr0026.pdf> as cited in <http://www.workplacesrespond.org/learn/the-facts/the-facts-on-the-workplace-and-domestic-violence>

⁶ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2010. *Occupational Homicides by Selected Characteristics, 1997-2009*. Available at: http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/work_hom.pdf as cited in <http://www.workplacesrespond.org/learn/the-facts/the-facts-on-the-workplace-and-domestic-violence>

Victims of sexual violence also face challenges in the workplace. The United States Department of Justice estimates that eight percent of sexual assaults occur while the victim is working⁷. Sexual violence affects people from all socioeconomic spectrums; however, people working in the restaurant and service industries or those experiencing poverty face an increased risk⁸. Women are the victims in 80% of rapes and sexual assaults that occur in the workplace⁹. One study conducted between 2005 and 2009 indicated that rape/sexual assault accounted for 2.3% of all nonfatal violence in the workplace¹⁰. Other research found that 38% of employed women have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace¹¹. Regardless of where the incident occurs (on or off work premises), sexual violence can greatly impact a victim's employment. This can result in absenteeism, poor job performance and fear of being at work⁸. One study found that 50% of victims quit their jobs following the assault because of how severely they were impacted¹².

There are steps a workplace can take to keep victims and other employees safe. The Nevada Domestic Violence Prevention Council created a helpful toolkit to assist employers in navigating these challenging situations¹³. The National Sexual Violence Resource Center also publishes guidance for employers to increase safety and respond to sexual violence in their workplace¹⁴. NNADV encourages employers to utilize these resources to support their employees experiencing domestic and sexual violence.

NNADV also supports equal pay for women and paid sick leave for victims of domestic and sexual violence needing to attend court, receive medical care and counseling. Victims who do not receive paid sick leave to attend court often decide to miss court dates to avoid jeopardizing their employment. This can result in the dismissal of charges and the dissolution of protection orders. The absence of paid sick leave also can limit a victim's ability to receive advocacy and support. These circumstances decrease a victim's safety, delay a victim's ability to regain independence from the abuse and make them less likely to join the workforce or maintain employment.

Successfully joining the workplace and taking care of families can be a challenging balance for all women. This difficulty is compounded when women are experiencing domestic and sexual violence. NNADV urges the Nevada Commission For Women to consider these challenges when discussing how to better support women in the workforce. NNADV is grateful for the opportunity to share this information and is happy to provide any support or resources needed by the Commission.

Sincerely,

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⁷ <http://www.workplacesrespond.org/learn/the-facts/the-costs-of-sexual-violence>

⁸ http://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/publications_nsvrc_overview_sexual-violence-workplace.pdf

⁹ Duhart, D. T. (2001) National Crime Victimization Survey: Violence in the workplace 1993—99 (NCJ 190076). Retrieved from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics: <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/vw99.pdf>

¹⁰ Harrell, E. (2011). Workplace violence, 1993-2009: National Crime Victimization Survey and the census of fatal occupational injuries (NCJ 233231). Retrieved from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics: <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/vw09.pdf>

¹¹ Potter, S. J., & Banyard, V. L. (2011). The victimization experiences of women in the workforce: Moving beyond single categories of work or violence. *Violence and Victims*, 26, 513-532. doi:10.1891/0886-6708.26.4.513

¹² Tjaden, P., & Thoennes, N. (2006). Extent, nature, and consequence of rape victimization: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey (NCJ 210346). Retrieved from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/210346.pdf>

¹³ Nevada Domestic Violence Prevention Council Domestic Violence & the Workplace: A Toolkit for Employers

http://ag.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/agnvgov/Content/Hot_Topics/Victims/DVPC/DV_Toolkit_for_Employers.pdf

¹⁴ <http://www.nsvrc.org/sexual-violence-and-the-workplace-information-for-employers#Resources%20for%20Employers>