The Hotline Supports Implementation of the Safe Connections Act

For most people, communication through their mobile phone is an essential part of daily life. Imagine contacting friends, family, employers, childcare providers, or anyone else without it. For survivors of domestic violence, their cell phone can be a critical part of their journey towards a safer future, but misuse of the technology by the partner choosing to cause harm and a reliance on them for cellular services increases vulnerability.

The Safe Connections Act, which President Biden signed into federal law last December, aims to protect victims of intimate partner violence, sexual assault, stalking, and/or trafficking with options to separate from their abusive partner’s wireless plan. The law requires U.S. wireless carriers to separate a survivor’s phone line from the primary account holder’s plan if the primary account holder is the abusive partner. It also makes it harder for partners who choose to cause harm to see if a survivor is seeking help by omitting records of calls or text messages to crisis hotlines from call logs and provides up to six months of emergency financial support for survivors who can’t afford to pay for a mobile plan.

The Hotline is proud to have entered into a multi-year partnership with CTIA (Cellular Telephone Industries Association), working on behalf of the U.S. wireless industry, to better support domestic violence survivors’ access to wireless services and facilitate the rapid and trauma-informed implementation of the Safe Connections Act.

Under the partnership, The Hotline and CTIA will work together to provide survivors with access to the 24/7 resources they need; and explore ways to enhance tools for customer service representatives so they can better help those impacted by relationship abuse when handling these sensitive requests.

The Hotline is proud to continue to support survivors through our national partnerships and to share our expertise with industry leaders to ensure the needs of survivors are centered.

“We applaud AT&T, T-Mobile, Verizon, UScellular, and the wireless industry for stepping up to set new corporate standards that will further the safety of survivors in the U.S. We commend FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel’s commitment to help those impacted by abuse, and her desire to quickly enhance the telecommunications experience to best meet the needs of survivors.

The Hotline hears from thousands of survivors each year who share the devastating effects of abusive partners using phones and other devices to control, harass, stalk, and cause harm. The ability to leave a shared phone plan can be a critical and possibly lifesaving step in a survivor’s journey to safety.

Katie Ray-Jones, CEO of The Hotline

This is the nation’s leading conference on domestic violence. We will bring together 600+ individuals from across the world for four days of discussion, activism, learning, community, and fun.

This conference is designed for survivors, advocates, and allies working to shift power back to survivors, and community, corporate leaders, and stakeholders dedicated to creating healthy relationships for all.

For more information on registration or sponsorship opportunities, please visit ncadv.org/conference.
Soca BJJ Girls Against Domestic Violence

Incredible things happen when communities come together to support survivors and The Hotline. Giving back has been part of the Soca Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu women’s program since it began. Last fall the program, based out of the Soca Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Academy in Wantagh, NY, created Soca BJJ Girls Against DV to raise awareness about relationship abuse and critical funds for The Hotline. When approached by student Patricia Murphy about fundraising for The Hotline, Professor Sam Frietas immediately said yes.

Sam, who first practiced Jiu-Jitsu at twenty years old, illustrates the power of believing in oneself and of helping others. She became a black belt in 2019 and is a nine-time World Champion.

Gym members and friends collectively donated more than $8,000 to shift power back to survivors and help The Hotline answer calls, chats, and texts 24/7. The group made it easy for gym members to participate by offering a range of activities including a bake sale and designing custom t-shirts to sell. A highlight of their campaign was a self-defense workshop with Sam.

Thank you to all of Soca BJJ Girls Against DV and everyone who contributed! If you would like to fundraise to ensure The Hotline’s services are available to survivors across the country, please contact us at development@thehotline.org.

Interview with Kris Thomas, Curriculum and Instruction Senior Manager

Q. What led you to join The Hotline and eventually to lead the training team?
A. A lifelong passion for social justice and feminist causes led me to join The Hotline as an advocate on a temporary basis. I quickly fell in love with the mission and people who serve our mission, and decided to stay on a full-time basis. That was 9 years ago. I knew on my first day of training that I wanted to be on the Training Team - the ability to combine my social justice goals with my love of teaching and education was a dream.

Q. You and your team lead new Hotline advocates through a highly interactive, training program. Can you tell us what the training program covers?
A. Our New Advocate Training program is an extensive training in domestic violence advocacy that has grown significantly over the years.

We cover many topics, including an introduction to domestic violence and healthy relationships, the intersection of culture and domestic violence, safety planning with survivors and their families, navigating challenging conversations, including situations where mental health and substance use are an issue, supporting survivors of sexual violence, and supporting pregnant survivors and survivors with children.

We also have a variety of topics that our new advocates learn to give them additional insight on things like how the issue impacts marginalized populations, legal issues, immigration, supporting helpers, navigating conversations about suicide, and honing advocacy skills. During the end of their New Advocate Training, they engage in our Skill Building material which covers topics like supporting Native survivors, vicarious trauma, human trafficking, and DV in the military.

Q. How are new advocates supported once they begin taking calls, chats, and texts?
A. We have a transition period at the end of training where new advocates begin taking live calls, chats, and texts while still with their training cohort. This allows us to provide immediate support and debrief about challenges that come up before they transition fully to the floor. Once they are out of training, we meet up to check in on their advocacy journey at 1 month, 3 months, and 6 months. All new advocates have immediate access to a vast network of support at The Hotline, including Shift Support Specialists, managers, and peers.

Q. What qualities are the most important for an advocate to have?
A. Compassion, the ability to show empathy, listening and giving space to a caller to have their story heard, and being able to ask relevant questions and offer tailored strategies to increase their safety.
Impact of United States v. Rahimi for Domestic Violence Survivors

The presence of a firearm in a home dramatically increases the risk for intimate partner homicide. Unfortunately, we know partners who cause harm often use firearms to exert power and control over their victims, and most intimate partner homicides are committed using firearms. In fact, a male intimate partner’s access to a firearm increases the risk of homicide of a female partner five-fold.

Federal law prohibits people subject to final domestic violence protective orders, after an opportunity to appear and be heard in court, from possessing, receiving, shipping, or transporting firearms or ammunition if the individual is or was married to the protected person; lives or lived with the protected person in a romantic relationship, shares a child with the protected person, is the parent of the protected person, or is the intimate partner of the parent of the protected person.

In early February, a three-judge panel of the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals, which covers Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi, ruled that this law is unconstitutional in the case, U.S. v. Rahimi. While for now, this ruling applies only to Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi — federal law still prohibits those subject to final protective orders in other states from possessing firearms — this is not only extremely dangerous to survivors living in these states but sets a dangerous precedent for the rest of the country. Ruth Glenn, President of Public Affairs, shared the devastating impact of this ruling with media outlets across the country and called on a reversal of this harmful ruling.

In the first five weeks after the ruling, calls to The Hotline from survivors in Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi mentioning firearms increased more than 56% compared to the same time frame the previous year. This ruling has created confusion around firearms restrictions and removal around the country, which poses a threat to the safety and wellbeing of survivors. The Department of Justice has appealed U.S. v. Rahimi to the Supreme Court.

GEMS Group and debi lilly bouquets partner with The Hotline to bring smiles

The next time you’re in an Albertsons Companies store, be sure to browse the flower selection for an Extending Smiles by debi lilly bouquet - you might just stumble upon a tag in support of The Hotline! Giving back is built into the company and we are grateful for their support of The Hotline and survivors. By donating seventy-five cents (.75) of every bouquet sold to The Hotline during select months since 2021, they have invested over $110,000 in shifting power back to survivors.

This was possible thanks to GEMS Group, Inc., a company whose pure focus is to bring fresh flowers to consumers, working closely with Albertsons Companies’ stores. With the Extending Smiles by debi lilly brand, Albertsons Companies stores selected The Hotline as their charity of choice.

If you’re inspired to think about how your company can support survivors of domestic violence through a cause marketing campaign similar to this one, please reach out to development@thehotline.org. We’d love to talk with you!

A Year in Review

In 2022, survivors reaching out requested shelter the most often. Legal advocacy was needed most often secondly, followed by professional counseling, and emergency financial aid.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<td>Shelter</td>
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<td>Professional Counseling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency Financial Aid</td>
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*The following represent needs shared by the survivor contacting The Hotline.
Ways to Give

Your donation puts every survivor who reaches out to The Hotline on a path toward a safer future. Learn about how you can fundraise in other ways by visiting thehotline.org/waystogive today.

Checks can be sent to:
National Domestic Violence Hotline
P.O. Box 90249, Austin, TX 78709

Call to give at (737) 234-6464

There can be advantages to donating through:
- Donor-Advised Funds
- Mandatory IRA Distributions
- Stock or Mutual Funds
- Estate or Planned Gifts

Your unused vehicle (car, truck, motorcycle, RV, or boat) can benefit survivors. Visit bit.ly/TheHotline-CARS (link is case sensitive).

If you would like more information, please contact Donor Relations at development@thehotline.org.

Make your gift online at thehotline.org/2023SpringNewsletter or by scanning this QR code.

Thank you for your generosity!

National Membership Program:
Now Presented By The Hotline and NCADV

The Hotline and NCADV recently joined as one, forming Project Opal. One of the cornerstone programs of NCADV is its Membership Program. Members enjoy a variety of benefits, including complimentary attendance to all live #Advocates Virtual Learning Sessions, discounts on national conference registrations, a member-only newsletter, and access to a secure Member Portal, which houses over 60 past recordings from previous learning sessions. These sessions provide opportunities for in-depth exploration and rich discussion around important topics related to domestic violence, whether that is analysis of emerging issues, insights, best practices, or research.

Learn more about membership, or register to become a member today at bit.ly/NCADVmemeber

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FOLLOW US:

thehotline.org

loveisrespect.org

National Domestic Violence Hotline | P.O. Box 90249 | Austin, TX 78709

If you or someone you know is affected by relationship abuse, 24/7 support is available.

Call: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
Chat: thehotline.org
Text: “START” to 88788