

Domestic Violence Advocates Say No to Guns in Shelters

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Concealed Carry Bill Would Not Exempt Domestic Violence Programs or Other Sensitive Settings

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Madison-The Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence and other victim advocates from around the state called on legislators to insert reasonable protections for the safety of domestic violence victims, advocates, law enforcement officers and other members of the public in a bill allowing concealed firearms.

Unlike legislation that nearly passed in 2005, two proposals released today do not prohibit concealed weapons in particularly sensitive places like domestic violence shelters and programs or social service offices. Unlike current law, which allows retired law enforcement officers to carry concealed weapons, the bills under consideration have no process for training or certifying individuals who want to covertly carry guns.

"Victims flee to shelters and programs because their lives are in danger," said Patti Seger, executive director of the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence. "These spaces should be as safe and secure as possible. Victims should not have to give a second thought to the idea that someone could secretly be carrying a deadly weapon."

The bills released today only specifically exempt government buildings.

"It's ironic that legislators would exclude guns from their workplace, the State Capitol, but not think about the safety risks inherent at locations where some of the our most vulnerable community members seek safety and help," said Seger.

Advocates say that any bill that becomes law should include training requirements, regulation and a certification process.

"We currently train and certify active and retired law enforcement officers to carry guns," Seger continued. "It only makes sense to hold everyone else to similar standards."

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