

Duckworth Joins Blumenthal And Wyden In Introducing Expanded Legislation To Protect Domestic Abuse Survivors From Firearm Violence

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) today joined U.S. Senators Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) and Ron Wyden (D-OR) to introduce the *Lori Jackson – Nicolette Elias Domestic Violence Survivor Protection Act* to protect domestic violence survivors from firearm violence. This legislation would close loopholes that allow domestic abusers to legally obtain weapons and establish a federal grant program to support state and local efforts to keep firearms out of the hands of domestic abusers while they are subject to temporary or emergency restraining orders. The bill is named for two women who were both shot and killed by their abusive, estranged partners even after securing temporary restraining orders.

“Domestic violence is all too common across this nation, and every survivor deserves to feel safe and protected,” Duckworth said. “This means closing the senseless loopholes that allow abusers with temporary restraining orders to legally access firearms. We must do more to ensure the safety of survivors and support these necessary protections, and I’m proud to join Senators Blumenthal and Wyden in helping introduce this vital legislation.”

“Strengthening protective orders to keep guns out of the hands of domestic violence abusers will save lives – and could have saved Lori’s, Nicolette’s and so many others,” said Blumenthal. “When a gun is available, domestic violence is five times more likely to turn deadly for women. Closing this dangerous loophole and supporting local efforts to keep weapons out of the hands of abusers will protect domestic violence survivors.”

“The devastating loss Nicolette’s family has suffered is one no family should ever have to face,” Wyden said. “Keeping guns out of the hands of domestic violence abusers shouldn’t be controversial, it’s commonsense. No more lives should be taken because of inexcusable inaction against these abusers. It’s past time to end the cycle of gun violence and prevent future tragedy.”

Current federal law protects domestic violence survivors from gun violence by preventing their abusers from purchasing or possessing a firearm – but only once the court has issued a permanent restraining order. This leaves survivors unprotected exactly when they are in the most danger: when a domestic abuser first learns his or her victim has left and only a temporary restraining order is in place. Further, the current definition of “intimate partner” used to prohibit individuals convicted of domestic violence from purchasing or possessing a firearm includes spouses, former spouses, people with a child in common and cohabitants. However, there are many survivors of dating violence who were never married, do not live with their abuser and have no children.

The Lori Jackson – Nicolette Elias Domestic Violence Survivor Protection Act would restrict those under temporary restraining order from purchasing or possessing a firearm, and would extend protections to domestic violence survivors who have been abused by their dating partners.

The bill is cosponsored by U.S. Senators Chris Murphy (D-CT), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Edward J. Markey (D-MA), Bob Casey (D-PA), Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Cory Booker (D-NJ). It’s endorsed by Brady, Everytown for Gun Safety, Giffords, National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Oregon: Sexual Assault Support Services, Center for Hope and Safety, Center Against Rape and Domestic Violence, and Moms Demand Action.

Lori Jackson was a 32-year-old mother of two who fled her home with her two children and filed for a restraining order to protect her family from her estranged husband. She moved in with her mother in Oxford, Connecticut, and the court granted her a temporary protective order while she waited for a hearing to obtain a permanent restraining order. The day before the hearing was scheduled, Lori's husband shot and killed her and injured her mother Merry Jackson using a gun he legally possessed because a permanent protective order was not yet in place.

Nicolette Elias was a 46-year-old Portland mother of two young daughters who for years sought and secured restraining orders and temporary stalking orders against her estranged and abusive ex-husband. Despite all her attempts to protect herself and her daughters from a man who frequently threatened them and had access to firearms, in 2014, Nicolette was murdered by her former spouse in front of their children with a handgun that he refused to relinquish. He then forced their daughters out of the home, past their mother's body, and kidnapped them, taking them to his own home. There, later that day, he took his own life, shooting himself in the chest in front of the police.