



Respecting Accuracy in Domestic Abuse Reporting

P.O. Box 1404  
Rockville, MD 20849  
781-956-1034  
www.mediaradar.org

April 13, 2007

Senator Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
201 Russell Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Richard G. Lugar  
306 Hart Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Biden and Lugar:

Domestic violence is an important social problem. Around the world, research conclusively shows that women are at least as likely as men to engage in partner abuse.<sup>1</sup>

In recent years, several countries have passed laws designed to stop partner abuse. One of the reasons why these laws have failed to stop domestic violence is because they have not provided needed services to female abusers. In addition, these laws have resulted in widespread civil rights violations of persons falsely accused of abuse.

These are some examples:

- In **Australia** the federal government has run advertising campaigns that falsely portray only men as perpetrators. Refuge (shelter) services are provided exclusively for women. Anger management services are available for men, yet there are none for violent women. One Auditor General report found that only 9% of restraining orders that are granted based solely on the assertions of the "victim" are found to be continued when the alleged perpetrator is able to give their side of the story.<sup>2</sup> In **Tasmania**, the Family Violence Act of 2004 defines both economic and emotional abuse as *criminal* offenses.
- In **Canada**, the domestic violence laws are systemically applied on a gender discriminatory basis, as a result of federal and local legislation, regulation, and enforcement policies. "This is contrary not only to Section 15 of the Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms but to international conventions such as Article 7 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Articles 2 and 26 of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights."
- In **Germany**, the Force Law ("Gewaltschutzgesetz") allows alleged aggressors to be expelled from their residence for up to 14 days while ignoring the presumption of innocence. Michael Bock, professor of criminology at the University of Mainz, commented that the Gewaltschutzgesetz "gives an effective tool to the hands of mothers who want to separate children from their fathers. ... It is not meant to start a constructive dialog between the parties, but to expropriate, disempower, lock out, and punish men."
- **India** enacted its Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act in 2005, which defines domestic "violence" broadly to include any form of physical, emotional, or economic abuse. False allegations of abuse have now become common, resulting in many husbands taking their own lives.<sup>3</sup> The Cruelty Against Women Law "Section 498a" has been widely abused leading to arrests of innocent elders and women. The Indian Supreme Court has termed this as "legal terrorism."<sup>4</sup>

- In **Mexico**, the domestic violence law came into effect in February of this year. Under the law, men found guilty of being jealous or even sexual indifferent to their wives could face up to five years in prison.<sup>5</sup>
- **New Zealand** passed its Domestic Violence Act in 1996. As a result, according to Casandra Hewitt-Reid, “it is possible for a perfectly innocent man, who has done nothing outside the law, to be sent to prison on one person’s unsubstantiated word.”<sup>6</sup> Recently, two researchers accused the New Zealand Families Commission of “ideologically driven” bias in its one-sided portrayal of domestic violence.<sup>7</sup>
- **Spain** passed its Integral Law on Gender Violence in 2004. Recently the Dean Judge of Barcelona Maria Sanahuja criticized the Law, saying it has brought about the “massive detention of men for scarcely any reason” which she condemns as “a repugnant violation of fundamental rights.”<sup>8</sup> Following implementation of the law, the number of intimate partner homicides of both men and women increased.<sup>9</sup>

It has come to our attention that consideration is being given to an “International Violence Against Women Act.” This bill is based on a flawed World Health Organization survey that neglected to survey men and therefore failed to reveal the extent of female violence. Based on initial descriptions of I-VAWA,<sup>10</sup> **we believe that passage of this bill would not only fail to stop partner abuse, it would also inflict serious and lasting harm to families and children around the world.**

We, the undersigned 37 organizations around the world, strongly urge you to speak out against the International Violence Against Women Act.

Signed,

**Australia:**

Tony Miller  
*Dads in Distress, Inc.*

James Adams  
*Fathers-4-Equality-  
Australia*

Brett Kessner  
*Men’s Confraternity*

Sue Price  
*Men’s Rights Agency*

Edward Dabrowski  
*Shared Parenting  
Council of Australia*

**Canada:**

Georges Dupuy  
*Coalition pour la  
Défense des Droits des  
Hommes du Québec*

Earl Silverman  
*Family of Men*

Kris Titus  
*Fathers-4-Justice  
Canada*

Daniel Laforest  
*Fathers-4-Justice  
Québec*

Brian Jenkins  
*Fathers Are Capable  
Too: Parenting  
Association*

Lise Bilodeau

*L’Action des Nouvelles  
Conjointes du Québec*

Jean-Claude Boucher  
*L’après-Rupture, Inc.*

Brian Johnson  
*Regina Shared  
Parenting Network*

John F. Smith  
*World Father’s Union*

**Czech Republic:**

Eduard Bakalar  
*Consultancy for  
Divorcing Parents with  
Children*

Jiri Vodicka  
*PVVP - Real Equality*

Jiri Solc  
*Cesky Svaz Muzu*

Lubos Patera  
*Spravedlnost Detem*

**Germany:**

Dietmar Albers  
*DAS Familienrecht*

Dr. Eugen Maus  
*MANNdat e.V.*

**India:**

B.S. Saraswathi  
*Asha Kiran*

P.R.Gokul  
*Protect Indian Family  
Foundation*

Uma Challa  
*Save Indian Family  
Foundation*

**Ireland:**

Mary T. Cleary  
*AMEN – Abused Men*

Nora Bennis  
*Mothers At Home*

Roger Eldridge  
*National Men’s Council  
of Ireland*

**Netherlands:**

Ad Verdiesen  
*DivorcedDads/Family4  
Justice-Netherlands*

Th. M. Nieuwenhuizen  
*Netherlands Foundation  
for Parents without  
Access*

**New Zealand:**

Jim Bailey  
*Hands on Equal Parents*

John Potter  
*Masculinist Evolution  
New Zealand*

**Spain:**

Antonio Luengo  
*Asociacion para el  
Estudio del Maltrato y el  
Abuso*

Antonio Javier Morcillo  
y Martínez  
*Grupo de Estudios -  
Padres e Hijos*

**United Kingdom:**

Erin Pizzey  
*International Founder of  
Refuges (Shelters) for  
Victims of Domestic  
Violence*

John Bannon  
*Familieslink*

Artur J. N. Oborski  
*Families Against Rough  
Treatment*

David Hughes  
*ManKind Initiative*

Anne Harris  
*St. Neots Abuse Project  
(SNAP)*

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1 [http://www.mediaradar.org/international\\_dating\\_violence\\_study\\_results.php](http://www.mediaradar.org/international_dating_violence_study_results.php)

2 [http://www.audit.wa.gov.au/reports/report2002\\_05.html](http://www.audit.wa.gov.au/reports/report2002_05.html)

3 <http://suicidenoteofhusband.blogspot.com/>

4 [http://www.498a.org/contents/judgements/SupremeCourtJudgement\\_LegalTerrorism.pdf](http://www.498a.org/contents/judgements/SupremeCourtJudgement_LegalTerrorism.pdf)

5 [http://www.wnd.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE\\_ID=54439](http://www.wnd.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=54439)

6 <http://nzmera.orcon.net.nz/femfasci.html>

7 [http://subs.nzherald.co.nz/section/1/story.cfm?c\\_id=1&objectid=10410452](http://subs.nzherald.co.nz/section/1/story.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10410452)

8 <http://www.mediaradar.org/barcelonaJudgeCriticizesGenderViolenceLaw.php>

9 <http://www.mir.es/MIR/Publicaciones/catalogo/anuarios/anuarios05/anuario2005.pdf>

10 <http://www.endabuse.org/programs/printable/display.php3?NewsFlashID=771>