

I have learned by experience that when seconds count, our wonderful police officers are minutes away. On that fateful day when I learned that lesson, I decided to become a safe, educated citizen who could protect her family if ever threatened again. That's how this mom became educated, involved, an advocate and an instructor who volunteers her time so that other women can do the same.

No one should ever have to live in fear of their life with nothing to protect themselves with. Please, support the abused and victimized by allowing them to protect their lives. Please, vote yes on this bill so that these women I know and love, the millions we will never meet, will never be hurt again! Their stories are below.

Unfortunately, women are often targets of violent crime by strangers, but also by those we love and trust. Our status, culture of acceptance are taken advantage of. Women are abused slowly and over time so that their psyche is permanently altered. They come to believe, by way of the abuser, that there's no one out there to help. They are told that they should be ashamed for what has happened, and that they deserved it. Then, when a woman is able to get the resources she needs to break free, she is often further abused and in some cases - murdered. How many lost women have we seen on the news over the last 10 years?

During this horror, survivors have little to protect themselves. I know these women!!!! I know far too many women who are harassed, abused, raped. I even knew a woman who was murdered by someone she knew; the case is still open ten years later. In too many cases the women were scared to speak out because of the abuse. They were unable to gather the documentation it would take to build a "good and substantial" reason. Indeed, even trying to do so by calling the police every time they were abused is the very act that puts them at risk! I have a dear friend who was raped on a date several years ago in college. She didn't report the rape because she knew that, when faced in court, the rapist would claim she went out on the date and went along with it. She couldn't bring herself to go through that horror, and I can't blame her. But then, she continued to live in anguish because she would see her rapist, the person who took her innocence and trust in humanity away, on campus. She was absolutely scared that he would come after her again. And yet, she had no documentation to obtain a wear and carry permit and to protect herself. Neither did my friend who was murdered.