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As Lifetime Heads To Washington For Its ‘Stop Violence Against Women Week,’ New Poll Shows That More Than 7 Out of 10 Young Women and 64% of Men Ages 16-24 Know Someone in an Abusive Relationship

Ten Years After Congress Created the Violence Against Women Act, Young Women and Men Consider Gender Violence to Be a Public, not Private Problem, With Congress and Law Enforcement Key Institutions Responsible for Addressing

Vast Majority of Young People Say Violence Against Women is Extremely Serious, Common and Receiving Too Little Attention, and Young Women Say They Must Take Special Safety Precautions

[NEW YORK, March 7 / PRNewswire/] – A new Lifetime Television poll shows that the vast majority of young people – the first generation to come of age in the ten years since Congress adopted the most far-reaching law, the Violence Against Women Act, to address gender violence in the U.S. – believe that violence against women remains an extremely serious and common problem. Nearly three quarters (72%) believe that violence against women – defined as domestic violence; acts of sexual assault, such as rape; stalking; and, verbal, physical, and emotional abuse – receives too little attention. To this generation, violence is no longer a private, personal matter, but rather a critical societal problem which public institutions, like Congress and law enforcement, should take the lead in addressing. The dramatic survey results come as thousands of advocates, survivors, business and political leaders, athletes and celebrities such as Grammy-winners Alanis Morissette, Lee Ann Womack and Michael Bolton descend on the capital for Lifetime’s 4th annual “Stop Violence Against Women Week,” March 7-11, and as the Network officially re-launches its Emmy-winning on-air, online, community and legislative initiative “Our Lifetime Commitment: Stop Violence Against Women.”

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According to the recent Lifetime survey of 600 women and men, ages 16-24, violence has personally touched their lives much more so than people have reported in prior studies:

- Approximately seven in ten women (77%) and men (64%) said they know or have known someone in an abusive relationship and approximately six in ten say that they know a woman who has been sexually assaulted. This is a dramatic increase from a Family Violence Prevention Fund 1996 survey of Adults 18+ that found that only 33% of respondents have known a woman in an abusive relationship.
- For young women the personal connection is even more profound and the fear of sexual violence alters their daily life. Approximately nine out of ten (87%) young women said that they take special precautions to rarely or never walk alone after dark and nearly two-thirds (64%) said that they think about what could happen if they leave a drink unattended.

The survey suggested that some progress has been made in making gender violence no longer a silent, private problem and instead want Congress and law enforcement to address it. Young people clearly recognize that violence against women – specifically partner abuse, rape and stalking – is a crime and that public institutions are responsible for addressing the problem.

- A majority (63%) named law enforcement as the first and second most responsible for addressing the problem. More than one-third of respondents (36%) said Congress is either first or second most responsible.
- However, a gender gap remains on how serious the issue is among men and women. 75% of young women think the issue is “extremely serious” compared to 57% of young men, thus demonstrating the importance of Lifetime’s campaign, in collaboration with ESPN and others, to reach both women and men.

Young people are also willing to speak out and address violence against women themselves.

- When asked what they would do if they knew a friend or relative who was abusing a girlfriend or wife, half (50%) of all young men surveyed said that would say something to him about his abusive behavior.

- More than two-thirds (66%) said that they'd be somewhat or very likely to report the abuse to the police.
- Nearly three-quarters (74%) of both men and women said that they would urge the woman to get help.
- And a majority of both women and men said that they would not remain uninvolved.

In addition, young women and men have a much higher “IQ on Violence Against Women” than previous studies have found.

- 91% knew that less than one-third of rapes and sexual assaults are reported to law enforcement officials.
- 85% knew that more than one million women are stalked by men each year.
- 80% knew that, in the US, the leading cause of injury to women between 15 and 25 is battering.
- 75% knew that a woman is more likely to be raped by her husband, partner, boyfriend or acquaintance than she is to be raped by a stranger. This is a dramatic increase in awareness compared to a poll done in 2002 that found nearly 6 in 10 Americans age 18+ (58%) wrongly believed that women are more likely to be raped by someone they don't know.

However, serious misconceptions still exist and young people say that they are exposed to gratuitous violence in music, video games and other entertainment that make people less sensitive to the issue of violence against women.

- Nearly half of women and more than half of men still believe that women abuse men just as much as men abuse women. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, in 2001, among Adults 18+, women accounted for 85 percent of the victims of intimate partner violence and men accounted for approximately 15 percent of the victims.
- 78% of respondents believe that the number one reason a woman stays in an abusive relationship is low self-esteem, even though in reality the reasons are much more complicated, including financial and custody issues and fear.

- Three quarters (75%) of those people surveyed said that they know someone who listens to songs, plays video games, etc. that depict physical or sexual violence against women as acceptable behavior, but 72% said that exposure makes the listener or viewer much or somewhat less sensitive to violence.

The poll is part of Lifetime's Emmy Award-winning campaign "Our Lifetime Commitment: Stop Violence Against Women," which is dedicated to: raising awareness of various forms of violence, such as domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking; offering lifesaving information and support; promoting passage of bi-partisan supported national legislation; and engaging women and men to work together to prevent violence. The initiative includes on-air programming such as an original documentary, "Terror at Home: Domestic Violence in America," online content, community outreach and legislative advocacy, including Lifetime's support of reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act.

Survey Methodology: The survey was conducted online by The Michael Cohen Group for Lifetime Television from February 9-16, 2005, among 600 young people, 16-24 years of age. The sample was comprised of 50% female and 50% male respondents. One-third of respondents were 16-18; one-third of respondents were 19-21; one-third of respondents were 22-24. Additionally, quotas were set to ensure racial representation that is reflective of the U.S. population between 16-24 as a whole. (A full report is available upon request.)

Lifetime's Partners: Lifetime's non-profit partners include: American Bar Association; Break the Cycle; Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence; Equality Now; Legal Momentum; Family Violence Prevention Fund; Darkness To Light; Help USA; International Justice Mission; Jackson Katz; Dr. Alan McEvoy; MVP Strategies; Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (New York City); Men Can Stop Rape; Mentors in Violence Prevention; The Michael Bolton Charities; The National Center for Victims of Crime; National Latino Alliance for the Elimination of Domestic Violence; National Coalition Against Domestic Violence; National Domestic Violence Hotline; National Network to End Domestic Violence; National Sexual Violence Resource Center; Partnership Against Child Abuse; RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network); Safe Horizon; Sports Leadership Institute; StopFamilyViolence.org; V-Day; Vital Voices; The Wireless Foundation; WomensLaw.org and more, many of which helped to

inform the survey questionnaire. Lifetime's campaign is made possible by: on-air sponsor Whirlpool, media partner Comcast, off-air corporate partner The Body Shop and collaborator ESPN.

About Lifetime: LIFETIME is the leader in women's television and one of the top-rated basic cable television networks. A diverse, multi-media company, LIFETIME is committed to offering the highest quality entertainment and information programming, and advocating a wide range of issues affecting women and their families. LIFETIME Television, Lifetime Movie Network, Lifetime Real Women, Lifetime Radio for Women, Lifetime Home Entertainment and Lifetime Online are part of LIFETIME Entertainment Services, a 50/50 joint venture of The Hearst Corporation and The Walt Disney Company.

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