

Attorney General Ashcroft Challenges Men to Take the Pledge to Defeat Domestic Violence

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Contact: Angela Harless of the Department of Justice, 202-307-0703,
<http://www.takethepledge.gov>

WASHINGTON, Oct. 8 /U.S. Newswire/ -- Attorney General John Ashcroft today announced the release of a Justice Department-sponsored public service announcement (PSA) challenging men from all walks of life to help join the fight in eliminating domestic violence. The 30 second and 15 second PSAs are designed to air during the month of October commemorating "Domestic Violence Awareness Month," although additional versions of the PSA without the tagline noting October's designation are also being made available to run past this month.

"Domestic violence is wrong and destroys the lives of far too many women and children. I'm challenging men across America to take the pledge against domestic violence. We must work together to eliminate the horrific cycle of violence," said Attorney General John Ashcroft. "This public service announcement demonstrates the Bush Administration's unceasing commitment to keep families safe, hold offenders accountable, and bring communities together in our ongoing efforts to end domestic violence."

The PSA, which features Attorney General John Ashcroft, John Lynch of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, U.S. Air Force Colonel Will Gunn, and others to encourages men to pledge to never commit, condone or remain silent about domestic violence. Information about the pledge, as well as a digital version of the PSA, is available at <http://www.takethepledge.gov>.

"When domestic violence is ignored, thousands of women and their families' lives are at risk," said Office on Violence Against Women Director Diane M. Stuart. "Women and their families deserve to live safe and healthy lives, free of violence. We encourage everyone to support this effort."

At a White House event earlier today, President Bush signed a proclamation declaring the month of October as "Domestic Violence Awareness Month." The President announced two important initiatives, the Justice Department's Family Justice Center Initiative and the Department of Health and Human Services' Safe and Bright Futures for Children Initiative. The Justice Department will lead a \$20 million-dollar program to develop comprehensive domestic violence victim service and support centers in 12 communities across the country. This unprecedented pilot program, the President's Family Justice Center Initiative, will make victims' search for help and justice easier by bringing professionals who provide an array of necessary services together under one roof. In addition, the President announced the release of a new Stop Family Violence postage stamp from which the proceeds will help victims of domestic violence.

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