

National Network to End Domestic Violence Praises Landmark Supreme Court Decision

Washington, D.C. [February 24, 2009] – Advocates against domestic violence today applauded the U.S. Supreme Court’s 7-2 decision to uphold the federal Lautenberg Amendment that bans convicted domestic violence abusers from possessing firearms. The *United States v. Hayes* ruling reversed a decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit that would have posed a serious danger to victims of domestic violence by allowing convicted abusers to maintain firearms.

“We are delighted with the Court’s decision to uphold reasonable limits on the possession of firearms,” said Sue Else, President of the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV). “Batterers should not have access to guns. This decision is a major victory for victims of domestic violence and their families.”

Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), a leader in the fight to reduce gun violence and the author of the domestic violence gun ban, said, “Since it was enacted, my domestic violence gun ban has kept more than 150,000 guns out of the hands of domestic abusers. We know a gun in the home makes it much more likely that domestic abuse results in death and today’s decision means we can continue keeping guns out of dangerous hands and saving innocent lives.”

The case originated in West Virginia, and the West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WVCADV) is also celebrating today’s victory. “The U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling aligns the Fourth Circuit with the rest of the country; confirms the intention of Congress in responding to the seriousness of domestic violence; and affirms levying real and long term consequences on people who use violence. WVCADV is pleased with the ruling of the U.S. Supreme Court Justices,” said Sue Julian and Tonia Thomas, Team Coordinators for WVCADV.

NNEDV, joined by the Domestic Violence Legal Empowerment and Appeals Project (DV LEAP) at George Washington University Law School, filed a brief supporting the sensible ban on gun possession by all offenders convicted of misdemeanor domestic violence. The Court cited the brief in its decision.

Joan Meier, DV LEAP's Director, said, "It is gratifying to see a strong majority of the Court reject the cramped and frankly illogical reading of the statute put forward by the Fourth Circuit and instead endorse the clear purpose of the legislature, not to mention common sense."

"Arming the people who brutally beat their spouses or partners is a recipe for disaster," Else said. "The Supreme Court made the right decision by upholding the domestic violence gun ban, keeping guns out of the hands of batterers and helping victims recovering from abuse to stay safe."

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The National Network to End Domestic Violence Fund (NNEDV) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to providing public education, training and technical assistance to maintain and develop the professional expertise of advocates working to end domestic violence. NNEDV strives to strengthen advocates as organizers and activists in the tradition of social change movements. For more information, please visit www.nnedv.org.