



Commonwealth of Virginia
Office of Governor Bob McDonnell

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Governor Declares October Domestic Violence Awareness Month and Establishes Domestic Violence Prevention and Response Advisory Board

Panel Will Focus on Effort to Reduce Domestic and Sexual Violence, Improve Victim Services, and Hold Offenders Accountable

RICHMOND – Governor Bob McDonnell has declared October [Domestic Violence Awareness Month](#) in the Commonwealth, and issued [Executive Order #25](#) establishing the Domestic Violence Prevention and Response Advisory Board. The Board will advise the Governor on ways to prevent domestic violence, improve services to victims, and reduce the social stigma too often encountered by victims of domestic violence, encouraging previously silent victims to seek help.

Speaking about the proclamation and the Advisory Board, Governor McDonnell noted, “As a prosecutor, legislator, and Attorney General, I witnessed first-hand the impact that domestic violence has on its victims, their families, and our communities. That is why I made a campaign promise to create the Domestic Violence Prevention and Response Advisory Board to produce positive recommendations and engage in an ongoing dialogue in an effort to reduce domestic violence crimes in Virginia. Recognizing October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month will also help draw attention to this important issue. I will continue to do everything I can to ensure that Virginians remain safe and secure in their homes and neighborhoods.”

*Full texts of the Executive Order and Proclamation are below:

EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER TWENTY FIVE (2010)

**ESTABLISHING THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE
ADVISORY BOARD**

Importance of the Issue

The preservation of peace in our communities and the protection of all citizens of the Commonwealth from violence are fundamental priorities of government. Unfortunately, every year thousands of Virginians suffer the indignity of domestic violence and experience emotional, physical, psychological and financial harm as a result of such crimes. Victimization strikes people of all ages and abilities, as well as all economic, racial, and social backgrounds. Furthermore, the physical and emotional trauma suffered by victims of domestic and sexual violence, often compounded by silence and stigma surrounding the crime, calls for special attention in our prevention and response efforts.

According to the Virginia Department of State Police, 4,487 forcible sex offenses, including rape, sodomy, and assault with an object, were reported in 2009 in jurisdictions throughout the Commonwealth. These acts of violence resulted in 4,779 victims. Tragically, over 61 percent of these victims were under the age of 17.

Unfortunately, these numbers do not reflect the complete picture relating to acts of sexual and domestic violence in Virginia because many victims do not report the incident to law enforcement.

Domestic and sexual violence impacts all segments of our society and is on the rise in certain areas.

In April 2010, the U.S. Department of Education, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the U.S. Secret Service released a report indicating that the incidents of college campus violence have drastically increased in the past 20 years. One in five women who attend college will be the victim of a sexual assault during her four years on campus. The Commonwealth's institutions of higher education, as demonstrated by recent events, are not immune from these acts of campus violence.

To make Virginia's citizens, families, and communities safe, it is appropriate that the Commonwealth dedicate resources to prevent, combat, and reduce domestic violence in Virginia.

Establishment of the Advisory Board

While many localities have taken necessary steps to address domestic violence in their communities, public policymakers must continuously strive to improve the services and support for Virginia's domestic violence victims and survivors. Statewide collaboration is essential in order to provide services to victims; to create programs aimed at preventing and responding to such tragedies; and to hold offenders accountable.

Accordingly, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor, under Article V of the Constitution of Virginia and under the laws of the Commonwealth, including but not limited to Section 2.2-134 of the *Code of Virginia*, and subject always to my continuing and ultimate authority and responsibility to act in such matters, I hereby establish the Governor's Domestic Violence Prevention and Response Advisory Board. This Board will continue the dialogue with state and local agencies, as well as involve stakeholders, to make recommendations for changes to our laws, policies, and procedures to enhance Virginia's response to domestic violence at all levels.

This Advisory Board will promote ongoing collaboration among relevant state and local agencies, as well as private sector and community partners involved in domestic violence prevention, enforcement and response efforts.

Composition of the Advisory Board

The Governor's Domestic Violence Prevention and Response Advisory Board shall operate under the direction of the Secretary of Public Safety. Recognizing that these efforts will require the work of individuals across a broad spectrum of professions and expertise, the Advisory Board shall consist of designees from the following agencies and organizations:

Office of the Attorney General;
Supreme Court of Virginia;
Commonwealth's Attorneys' Services Council;
Virginia Association of Commonwealth's Attorneys;
Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police;
Virginia Sheriffs' Association;
Virginia Department for the Aging;
Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services;
Virginia Department of Corrections;
Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services;
Virginia Department of Education;
Virginia Department of Health;
Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development;
Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice;
Virginia Department of Social Services;
Virginia Department of State Police;
Virginia State Crime Commission;
Family and Children's Trust Fund of Virginia;
Virginia Center on Aging;
Virginia Poverty Law Center;
Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund;
Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance;
Virginia Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators, Inc.;
Virginia Coalition Against Campus Sexual Assault;
Virginia Chapter of the International Association of Forensic Nurses;
Virginia Network for Victims and Witnesses of Crime, Inc.; and

Representatives from the Virginia Senate and House of Delegates

Other members may be added at the discretion of the Secretary of Public Safety.

Staff support to the Advisory Board shall be provided by the Office of the Governor, the Office of the Secretary of Public Safety, the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, the Virginia Department of Social Services, and such other agencies as the Governor may designate. All Cabinet Secretariats and executive branch agencies shall cooperate fully with the Advisory Board and render such assistance as may be requested.

Duties of the Advisory Board

The Advisory Board's responsibilities shall include the following:

- Assess means of improving services to children who have experienced, witnessed, or been exposed to the effects of domestic violence.
- Work in conjunction with the Virginia State Crime Commission and the Office of the Attorney General, to complete a comprehensive review of Virginia's protective order laws and processes, and make recommendations for clarifying the protective order process and enhancing the enforcement of protective orders.
- Review the recommendations set forth in previous relevant reports and studies, and develop strategies for implementing sound recommendations from these sources. This assessment should include prioritizing initiatives, developing a timeline for achieving goals, and designating duties to accomplish the Advisory Board's stated purpose of preventing and responding to domestic violence.
- Develop recommendations for enhancing services and community response to victims of domestic violence who are traditionally underserved.
- Investigate ways to make Virginia's college campuses safer and reduce incidents of violence of all kinds.
- Make any other recommendations as may be appropriate.

The Advisory Board shall submit to the Governor its findings and recommendations on matters potentially impacting the development of the Executive Budget no later than September 15, 2011. The Board shall submit a final report of its activities, findings and recommendations no later than October 1, 2011. Should the Advisory Board be extended beyond a year, this pattern of reporting shall continue for the duration of the Board.

An estimated 200 hours of staff time will be required to support the work of the Commission.

Necessary funding to support the Commission and its staff shall be provided from federal funds, private contributions, and state funds appropriated for the same purposes as the Advisory Board, as authorized by Section 2.2-135 of the *Code of Virginia*, as well as any other private sources of funding that may be identified. Estimated direct costs for this Commission are \$5,000.00 per year.

Effective Date of the Executive Order

This Executive Order supersedes and rescinds Executive Order 93 (2009) issued on September 28, 2009, by Governor Timothy M. Kaine. This Executive Order shall become effective upon its signing and shall remain in full force and effect until one year from its signing, unless amended or rescinded by further executive order.

Given under my hand and under the Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia this 1st day of October, 2010.

Robert F. McDonnell, Governor

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

WHEREAS, the crime of domestic violence violates an individual's privacy and dignity, as well as their security and humanity, and whereas, these crimes involve the use of physical, emotional, sexual, psychological, and economic control and abuse; and

WHEREAS, the problems of domestic violence are not confined to any group or groups of people, but cut across all segments of society; and

WHEREAS, there were more than 63,000 calls to domestic and sexual violence hotlines across Virginia in 2009; and

WHEREAS, more than 6,500 adults and children received almost 255,000 nights of emergency or temporary shelter due to domestic violence; and,

WHEREAS, more than 62,000 emergency, preliminary, and final protective orders were issued by magistrates and courts across the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, domestic violence agencies throughout Virginia provide vital services to victims, including crisis hotlines, emergency shelter, legal advocacy, intervention, and programs for children and teenagers; and

WHEREAS, in addition to psychological and physical trauma caused by domestic violence, families and businesses across Virginia suffer serious economic loss due to medical expenses, police and court costs, shelters and foster care; and absenteeism; and

WHEREAS, public officials and all citizens of the Commonwealth must continuously strive to improve the services and support for Virginia's domestic violence victims and survivors; and

WHEREAS, national surveys find that most Americans hold significant misperceptions about domestic violence, indicating a serious need to increase public awareness of such issues; and

WHEREAS, during October, citizens of our Commonwealth are encouraged to remember domestic violence victims and their families, promote the programs and organizations that serve them, and participate in community awareness efforts;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Robert F. McDonnell, do hereby recognize October 2010 as **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH** in the **COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**, and I call this observance to the attention of all our citizens.

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