

DENVER DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL
Promoting a coordinated justice system and community response to domestic violence

April 26, 2017

Denver City Council Members
1437 Bannock Street
Denver, CO 80202

c/o Skye Stuart and Debra Bartleson

Esteemed Denver City Council Members:

On behalf of the Denver Domestic Violence Coordinating Council and our Denver Metro Domestic Violence Fatality Review committee, I strongly urge you to support the proposed municipal sentencing reform ordinance. Under current city ordinances, defendants convicted of park curfew violations and petty theft can receive the same sentences as defendants convicted of third and subsequent domestic violence offenses. The disparity of such sentencing is, at best disconcerting and the very worst, dangerous.

Domestic violence is an epidemic in our community, our state, and throughout the nation. Victims are at immediate risk of harm because of the easy access abusers have to them. As the statistics of our Denver Metro Domestic Violence Fatality Review reveal, the epidemic is only worsening right here in our community. Denver saw an escalation of domestic violence deaths in 2016: 11 victims died, an increase from one domestic violence related fatality in 2015. The strategy to preventing these deaths is multi-faceted, and effectively addressing domestic violence offenders at the municipal level is a crucial component that **has** to be included in that solution.

I appreciate and admire the work done by the Denver City Attorney's Office to rectify the inequities in Denver's municipal sentencing in such a way that better protects victims of domestic violence. I strongly encourage Denver City Council members to adopt this sentencing reform ordinance on behalf of victims and all members of our community.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have for me regarding this recommendation. I can be reached at [303.522.0932](tel:303.522.0932).

Sincerely,

DoraLee Larson, Executive Director

Managing the Denver Metro Domestic Violence Fatality Review
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