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**Subject:** Domestic Violence Press Conference  
**Location:** 1st Floor Lobby, Statehouse  
**When:** 1/7/2016 2:00:00 PM - 2:30:00 PM

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### Domestic Violence Press Conference

**Date & Location:** Thursday, January 7, 2016 at 2:00 p.m. at Statehouse, First Floor Lobby

**Purpose:** To announce the accomplishment of several outcomes from the Domestic Violence Task Force (10 Recommendations of 50 have been completed).

**Speaking Order:**

- (1) Governor;
- (2) Duffie Stone – Re. prosecutor and judicial funding and efficiency;
- (3) Marcia Adams – Re. HR policy for Cabinet agencies;
- (4) Richele Taylor – Re. professional boards and brochures;
- (5) Sara Barber – Re. survivor/victim’s perspective.

**Other Attendees:**

- (6) Director Bryan Stirling – Task Force Chair
7. Katie Morgan – Task Force Chair
8. Veronica Kunz, CVO – Act 141 Forms (Laura Hudson is out of town but passes along her sincere appreciation to the Governor.)

#### Overview of Task Force’s Progress:

- Last January (Jan. 29, 2015), I established the Domestic Violence Task Force.
- We are a proud state (proud for being ranked Top State people are moving to, Friendliest and Most Patriotic State, etc.), but we were not proud of being at the top of the list for the rate of women murdered by men. Based on two-year old data, we were 2<sup>nd</sup> highest then, but we are 1<sup>st</sup> highest now.
- Last June, I was proud to sign into law the Domestic Violence Reform Bill, but I knew that the culture in our state still needed to be changed, step by step and bit by bit.
- Last August, our Task Force (of more than 135 participating members from more than 65 agencies and organizations) proposed a list of 50 recommendations that target specific aspects of the culture of domestic violence, some big and some small.
- Today, after less than one year, I am announcing that 10 of those recommendations have been completed.
- **Today’s announcements are just the start of how we are changing South Carolina’s culture from the ground up.**
- **We are not going to whisper about domestic violence any longer:**
  - **We are going to make it a priority in our justice system.**
  - **We are going to make it okay to talk about at work.**
  - **We are going to screen for it when we provide services.**
  - **We are going to offer training to our professionals.**

- **And we are going to make information easily accessible and user-friendly.**
- Taken together, these outcomes show that South Carolina is no longer going to turn a blind eye towards a black eye.

**Talking Points:** (From victim's perspective.)

1. **Victims are not victims – they are survivors.** We know that domestic violence is a choice the abuser makes, not the victim. Calling them survivors changes our culture to one of choice that they can make to get out of a bad situation. We need a culture of empowerment, rather than one of revictimization.
  - Today, I am issuing an Executive Order to extend the Task Force past its original date of expiration (Dec. 31, 2015) to ensure that all 50 Recommendations are completed and that meaningful results are rendered for the people of South Carolina. This will remain a top priority of my administration to keep working on this year and next year.
2. **Survivors need to know that we have their backs – they need lawyers, not law enforcement officers, in the courtroom prosecuting domestic violence crimes against defense attorneys.** We need officers to be officers out in the field, and we need our attorneys to be attorneys in the courtroom.
  - a. SC is one of only three states that allow law enforcement officers to prosecute DV crimes.
  - b. SC is 6<sup>th</sup> highest in the nation for the rate of violent crime, and 42% of that violent crime in our state involves domestic relationships – prosecuting violent crime is prosecuting domestic violence crime.
    - Today, I am announcing that my Executive Budget will fund new prosecutors, new judges, and new public defenders to end this practice, which will also reduce caseloads and decrease backlogs (Rec. 8 and 9).
      - My Executive Budget provides:
        - \$2.9 million to assign prosecutors to the DV cases in magistrate and municipal court previously assigned to officers;
        - \$7.8 million for 144 new prosecutors;
        - \$1.7 million for 3 new judges and staff for Circuit Court;
        - \$6.6 million for public defenders (proportionate to increase for prosecutors at 85%).
      - This funding comes with accountability measures:
        - First, we want to see that our solicitors are taking over every single domestic violence case. It will be the solicitors' responsibility to see that their prosecutors are assigned to each one of these cases.
        - Second, we want to see the time-to-court decrease (speed). Currently, it takes more than a year for a case to get to court, and now we want to see that drop to less than a year, which will help victims and families move on and find resolution.
        - Third, we want to see better outcomes (quality), which means that our prosecutors need smaller caseloads. Currently, our caseloads are 376 cases per prosecutor. We have a goal of 280 cases per prosecutor, which will allow our attorneys to put more time and effort in each case – including more time to work with victims.
  - Beyond efficiency measures, the additional funding will also help our rural areas in two ways:
    - First, it will guarantee that there is a full-time prosecutor in every county in South Carolina.
      - Currently, 3 counties do not have a dedicated prosecutor (Allendale, Saluda, and McCormick).
    - Second, it will remove the disparity between high-poverty counties and low-poverty counties. Currently, there is a gap where prosecutors in high-

- poverty counties handle 93 more cases than in low-poverty counties. We have a goal to shrink that gap to just a 14 case differential (8%).
- Currently, Marion has a 933 case/prosecutor caseload and Richland only has a 231 case/prosecutor caseload.

- 3. Survivors need their independence from their batterers – jobs are the key to independence, and employers in SC need to be a support system for survivors.** We know that survivors are oftentimes most vulnerable at work when their whereabouts are known to their abuser.

  - Today, I am issuing an Executive Order for my Cabinet agencies to adopt a HR policy for domestic violence no later than April 1, 2016 (Rec. 3).
    - This HR policy will provide guidance to both management and employees on a protocol for domestic violence, including:
      - To ensure confidentiality;
      - To refer survivors to resources and services;
      - To create a safety plan while they're at work, possibly including setting an alternate work schedule or arranging an escort to and from the parking lot;
      - To work with survivors on leave if they can't come to work.
    - I want any survivor who works for me in my Cabinet to know that we will be a support to you – we will not be judgmental or unresponsive. You can come to us, and we will help you, because we want you to keep your job and stay independent.
    - Additionally, both the Chamber and SC SHRM have agreed to distribute the model policy to their members as well (Rec.47).
- 4. Survivors come from all walks of life, and we interact with survivors every day and do not realize it – State agencies and professionals that interface with survivors need to know the risk factors and warning signs of domestic violence to refer them to the proper resources.** On average, a woman will leave an abusive relationship 7 times before she leaves for good. Survivors may be crying out for help or may be giving subtle hints, so we should all be listening, looking, and ready to offer help.

  - Today, I am issuing an Executive Order for certain Cabinet agencies to adopt a risk assessment screening policy for domestic violence (Rec. 4).
  - Additionally, nine professional boards have committed to include domestic violence training as part of their continuing education credits: Doctors, Nurses, Dentists, OTs, PTs, Pharmacists, Social Workers, Cosmetologists, and Counselors and Therapists (Rec. 14).
- 5. Many survivors want help but don't know where to get it – no comprehensive statewide directory for domestic violence resources existed for South Carolina.** No one knew where to go for help, and we didn't know where the gaps were to try and fill. Gathering the information is Step One, but putting the information into easy-to-use formats is what really matters.

  - Today, I can announce that, so far, we have completed:
    - c. Brochures for Domestic Violence: The Task Force has created a one-page regional brochure to be printed from LLR's website for the Upstate, Midlands, and Lowcountry to keep in their offices and hand out to survivors (Rec. 15).
    - d. County-by-County Resources for Domestic Violence: The Task Force has created a resource directory for all services, including batterers' intervention programs and shelters, as well as a state-by-state comparison of dating violence laws, none of which previously existed (Recs. 33 & 35).
    - e. Fines and Fees Reporting Form for Victims: The Task Force has created a standardized reporting form for local governments to use when sending their annual report to the Treasurer's Office of how criminal fines and fees are spent. Act 141 requires that these funds are used for victims' services, but due to a lack of uniform reporting, no one knows where and how much of these funds are being spent (Rec. 41).

## What's Next?

- We have 10 Recommendations completed, so we have 40 more to go.
- This is only the beginning. In less than a year, we have already seen real changes to the culture in our state from this Task Force, and we also have a new law in action.
- As more recommendations are completed, I will announce them. I expect the next round of announcements to focus on law enforcement.
- Remember that these things do not happen overnight. It will take time to see how the new law performs, how the boost in funding for prosecutors and judges will help, and how the additional training and screening tools will make a difference.
- To change the culture, we have to change hearts and minds as much as we have to change laws and policies.
- The legislature is doing their part, the Task Force is doing our part, and we need the public to do theirs:
  - I need small business owners and my top executives to adopt a HR policy similar to what I'm doing – to be a support for anyone struggling with domestic violence.
  - I need doctors, nurses, dentists, OTs, PTs, cosmetologists, social workers, and counselors to choose to do the domestic violence training when it's time for you to recertify.
  - I need everyone to get informed and not ignore what's happening around you.
- Domestic violence is a direct attack on our families, which are the building blocks of our society. We are only as strong as our families are strong, and I want to make sure we are South Carolina strong through and through in every home in every part of the state.

Note – Three Executive Orders will be prepared for signature on Thursday morning:

1. To re-establish the Task Force with no expiration date;
2. To order Cabinet agencies to adopt HR policy for domestic violence (Marcia Adams);
3. To order certain Cabinet agencies to adopt screening policy to include a risk assessment for
4. domestic violence (Katie Morgan)