FACT SHEET:
Domestic Violence and Firearms

The presence of a firearm in a domestic violence situation greatly increases the likelihood of homicide for victims and bystanders. In 2017, the Rhode Island General Assembly passed the Protect RI Families Act, which requires abusers convicted of domestic violence misdemeanors or subject to restraining orders to surrender their firearms.¹

- Between 2006 and 2015, 54 people lost their lives to domestic violence homicides in Rhode Island. Though a similar number of homicide incidents involved stabbing as those that involved firearms, considerably more victims were killed with firearms (19 victims, or 42%) than by stabbing (14 victims, or 31%).²

- Rhode Island domestic violence police incident reports for the year 2015 show that 452 suspects were in possession of a firearm at the time of their arrest.³

- When a firearm is present in a domestic violence situation, the risk of homicide for women is five times greater than when a firearm is not present.⁴

- Women in the U.S. are 11 times more likely to be killed with a firearm than women in other developed countries.⁵

- Abusers having access to firearms is also dangerous for bystanders. Mass shootings are defined as incidents in which four or more people are killed (not including the shooter). An analysis of gun violence crimes from 2009-2016 found that 54% of mass shootings were related to domestic or family violence.⁶
  
  - 25% of the mass shooting fatalities were children. In mass shootings related to domestic or family violence, over 40% of the fatalities were children.⁷
  
  - In nearly half (42%) of the mass shootings, the shooter exhibited warning signs before the shooting indicating that they posed a danger to themselves or others. These red flags included acts, attempted acts, or threats of violence towards oneself or others; violations of protective orders; or evidence of ongoing substance abuse.⁸

3. Rhode Island Supreme Court Domestic Violence Training and Monitoring Unit. 2015.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.