



VIOLENCE FREE MINNESOTA

THE COALITION TO END RELATIONSHIP ABUSE

Violence Free Minnesota Statement on the *US v. Rahimi* Decision

Violence Free Minnesota expresses deep relief for today's decision in *US v. Rahimi*, which upheld a law barring people who are subject to a domestic violence restraining order from owning guns, though we remain disappointed that this matter had to come before the Court at all. The Court's decision today reinforces the notion that the safety of victim/survivors is dependent on a collective community response and the willingness of legal system partners to promote the protection of victim/survivors.

For over 30 years, Violence Free Minnesota has documented intimate partner homicides in our state, with a primary focus on five homicide risk factors that, if present, add to a victim's cumulative risk of being killed by their partner. **Nearly every year, guns are the most common means of intimate partner homicide in Minnesota—a finding that is also largely reflected nationwide.** From 1989–2018, of the 523 confirmed intimate partner homicides of adult women in Minnesota, 251 women (48%) were killed using a firearm, a number that nearly rivals all other means combined. Guns are also the most common means abusive partners use to kill people who are bystanders to or intervening in domestic violence in Minnesota. From 2018–2022, nearly 67% of bystanders/intervenors to domestic violence were killed by an abusive person using a firearm. **In many of these cases, even when firearm removal was warranted under existing law, the court did not order firearm removal or enforce their own order for firearm removal.**

Additionally, the mere presence of a gun, and the victim/survivor's knowledge that an abuser can and will use it, represents a coercive threat to the safety of victim/survivors and their families. Guns are frequently used by abusive partners not only to kill, but to intimidate, exploit, terrorize, and punish victim/survivors. **Today's decision truly represents a matter of life and death for victim/survivors and entire communities, not only in Minnesota but across the nation.**

The Supreme Court's decision is a key step in addressing one of the most serious threats to victim/survivors' lives and the lives of members of the general public, though we reiterate the need for more innovative public safety policies and infrastructure. Violence Free Minnesota remains unwaveringly committed to our mission to end relationship abuse in Minnesota. Our member programs throughout the state will continue to serve victim/survivors with courage. **A violence free Minnesota is only possible through the limitation and elimination of the most common and dangerous means of intimate partner violence and homicide, and we will continue to strive towards safer outcomes for all victim/survivors.**