

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Voices for Justice:  
*Victims Save Lives by Speaking Out***

**PHOENIX (September 26, 2014)** – Highlighting the important role domestic violence victims have in the criminal justice system is the focus of the 2014 Domestic Violence Awareness Month Press Conference, “Voices for Justice,” to be held at **9:00 a.m., October 7, 2014, at the Arizona State University Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law, Room 115, 1100 S. McAllister Ave, Tempe.** On Wednesday, the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) Regional Council unanimously signed a resolution supporting October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month, voicing their dedication to “ensuring the safety of domestic violence survivors and holding abusers accountable.”

Domestic violence survivor ‘Harper’ (name changed for her protection) says her life might have ended were it not for her perseverance in holding her abuser accountable in court and the police officer who believed in her. “I left my abuser after years of violence. He followed me and tried to kill me. The police officer who responded to the 9-1-1 call that night sat beside me and talked with me,” states Harper. “He helped me see life could be different. I worked with police, the prosecutor, and the court to see justice was done. My abuser was convicted. I never thought I would be safe and feel this happy again.”

MAG Regional Council Chair Michael LeVault says domestic violence is prevalent throughout the region. “Forty percent of MAG survey respondents told us that they personally knew someone who has experienced domestic violence. No one should have to live in fear. It is time to get serious about ending domestic violence.”

“Domestic violence is one of the most frequent and dangerous 9-1-1 calls responded to by police,” says El Mirage Police Chief and MAG Regional Domestic Violence Council Chair Steven Campbell. “Our goal is for every resident to feel safe at home and for every officer to feel safe when patrolling our streets.”

With domestic violence prevalent in recent headlines, Phoenix Police Chief Daniel Garcia has also pledged his support for regional efforts to improve how domestic violence offenders are arrested and prosecuted. “This is one of the most significant issues threatening the safety of our communities,” said Chief Garcia.

The Arizona Criminal Justice Commission notes that not all domestic violence cases end like Harper’s. The most common outcome for domestic violence arrests in Arizona end with a dismissal of the charge. Convictions are much more likely in cases where the victim is involved.

“When domestic violence victims feel safe and empowered through the criminal justice system, they are more likely to be involved and the case is more likely to end with a conviction,” says Maricopa County Attorney Bill Montgomery. “Victims who use their voice possess a powerful tool in holding their abuser accountable.”

The “Voices for Justice” press conference is part of the Protocol Evaluation Project, an initiative funded by the Governor’s Office and administered by MAG, the Maricopa County Attorney’s Office, and additional criminal justice system partners to improve the way the region arrests and prosecutes domestic violence offenders. For more information, please visit [www.azmag.gov](http://www.azmag.gov).

RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR  
*Domestic Violence Awareness Month*

A Resolution of Support for October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

Whereas, domestic violence is prevalent throughout the region as reported by 40 percent of MAG survey respondents saying that they personally knew someone who has experienced domestic violence, and

Whereas, the trauma and suffering caused by domestic violence destroys families, threatens the safety of neighborhoods, and weakens the ability of communities to thrive, and

Whereas, the region spends an estimated \$18-\$26 million a year addressing domestic violence through the criminal justice system as reported in a MAG study, and

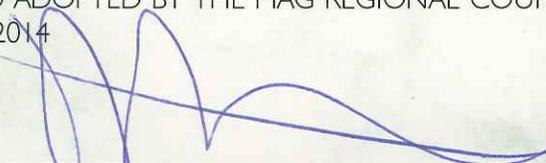
Whereas, the MAG Regional Domestic Violence Council was formed in 1999 to provide a forum for communication and action to effectively address, prevent, and eradicate domestic violence, and

Whereas, the MAG Regional Council is dedicated to ensuring the safety of domestic violence survivors and holding abusers accountable, now therefore,

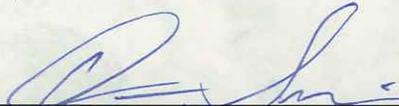
Be it resolved that the members of the MAG Regional Council express our support of October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

PASSED AND ADOPTED BY THE MAG REGIONAL COUNCIL THIS 24TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER 2014



  
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Mayor Michael LeVault, Chair, MAG Regional Council

ATTEST:

  
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Dennis Smith, MAG Executive Director



# Domestic Violence Fact Sheet 2014



- Domestic violence is prevalent in our communities. A scientific survey commissioned by MAG revealed that 40 percent of respondents personally knew someone who had experienced domestic violence. Seventy-two percent considered domestic violence to be a major problem in the region. In focus groups conducted by MAG, the percentage of people who knew a domestic violence victim ranged from 50 to 90 percent.<sup>1</sup>
- Last year, 124 people in Arizona lost their lives as a result of domestic violence.<sup>2</sup>
- On average, approximately 54 officers are murdered each year in the line of duty nationally. Approximately 14 percent of the officer homicides occurred during a response to a domestic violence call for service. More than half (51 percent) of lethal domestic violence calls involved officers being slain in an unprovoked ambush.<sup>3</sup>
- Thirty-nine percent of female homicides are perpetrated by an intimate partner.<sup>4</sup>
- Maricopa County had the largest increase in the number of domestic violence flagged arrests – 2,438 more in 2010 (12,560) than in 2001 (10,122)<sup>5</sup>.
- If it takes more than 10 days for the police officer's report to get to the prosecutor, the likelihood of prosecution and conviction drops by 25 percent.<sup>6</sup>
- On average, a woman experiencing abuse will attempt to leave approximately seven times before fleeing successfully.<sup>7</sup>
- Studies show that three to four million children between the ages of three to 17 are at risk of exposure to domestic violence each year. The emotional responses of children who witness domestic violence may include fear, guilt, shame, sadness depression and anger.<sup>8</sup>
- The most common recorded outcome for domestic violence arrests in Arizona is dismissal of the charge (38.2percent for domestic violence and 25.7percent for aggravated domestic violence). The most common sentence for an offender convicted of domestic violence and aggravated domestic violence was a probation term.<sup>9</sup>
- Researchers estimate that between 12 to 23 percent of women are affected by domestic violence at some point during their lifetime. In addition these survivors are typically victimized more than once.<sup>10</sup>
- A MAG study determined that the region spends between \$18-26 million a year responding to domestic violence through law enforcement, courts, and jails.<sup>11</sup>
- The MAG Regional Domestic Violence Council was established in 1999. Members of the council include elected officials, police officers, prosecutors, shelter and service providers, healthcare professionals and members of the Governor's Office Division for Women. The Regional Domestic Violence Council serves as the primary coordinating body for issues related to domestic violence and provides a forum for communication and coordinated action to effectively address, prevent, and eradicate domestic violence in the MAG region.
- The MAG Protocol Evaluation Project is identifying opportunities to ensure domestic violence offenders are arrested and prosecuted in the most efficient, effective manner possible. This project is supported with a STOP Violence Against Women grant from the Governor's Office.



# Referenced Material



1. Morrison Institute for Public Policy and Maricopa Association of Governments Domestic Violence Survey conducted by the Behavior Research Center, Inc., 2005
2. Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence Related Deaths Report, 2014
3. Meyer, Shannon & Carroll, The Police Chief, 78:24-27
4. Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2013
5. Arizona Criminal Justice Commission, Domestic Violence Arrest and Case Processing Data: An Analysis of the Information in Arizona's Computerized Criminal History Record System Report, 2013
6. <http://leb.fbi.gov/103/december/investigating-domestic-violence-raising-prosecution-and-conviction-rates>
7. Humboldt State University, 2008.  
[http://humboltdspace.calstate.edu/bitstream/handle/2148//453/Melanie\\_Berru.pdf?sequence=1](http://humboltdspace.calstate.edu/bitstream/handle/2148//453/Melanie_Berru.pdf?sequence=1)
8. <http://www.domesticviolenceroundtable.org/effect-on-children.html>
9. Arizona Criminal Justice Commission Domestic Violence Arrest and Case Processing Data: An Analysis of the Information in Arizona's Computerized Criminal History Record System Report, 2013
10. National Institute of Justice, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2000
11. An Exploration of the Fiscal Impact of Domestic Violence on Local Criminal Justice Systems in the MAG Region, 2006