



WHAT THEY ARE SAYING:

Broad Support for Justice Department's Updated Guidance on Improving Law Enforcement Response to Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence by Identifying and Preventing Gender Bias

WASHINGTON – Last week, the Department of Justice announced [updated guidance](#), “Improving Law Enforcement Response to Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence by Identifying and Preventing Gender Bias,” designed to help law enforcement agencies (LEAs) improve their response to sexual assault and domestic violence. The guidance has garnered broad support from law enforcement, prosecutors, and advocates. Check out what they are saying:

“Gender bias by law enforcement not only leads to failures to provide justice but also compounds the trauma of sexual violence for survivors. We applaud DOJ for taking steps to support survivors of gender-based violence by providing updated guidance to law enforcement about how to address and counter gender bias in their work.”

- Fatima Goss Graves, President and CEO of the National Women’s Law Center

“The updated guidance to improve law enforcement response to sexual assault and domestic violence is informed by decades of research and hands-on experience in investigating and prosecuting these difficult cases. Preventing gender bias, treating all victims with respect, conducting effective investigations, and following the other principles listed in the guidance will not only reduce re-traumatization of survivors, but will also result in stronger cases and more accountability. I was proud to serve as an advisor during the creation of these updated policies, leveraging 30 years as a domestic violence prosecutor at a DA’s Office that’s been leading the way in using victim-centered approaches, and I hope they will be adopted by police departments across the country. Survivors of sexual and intimate partner violence deserve to be treated with respect, to be believed and to receive all the necessary services and support.”

- Michelle Kaminsky, Chief of the Domestic Violence Bureau, Kings County, New York, District Attorney’s Office

“Sexual assault and domestic violence have long-lasting effects on our community and its members. For this reason, the guidance provided by the Department of Justice is essential to assist us as law enforcement to provide the best response to these types of incidents without further victimizing those we have taken an oath to protect and serve. With appropriate handling of these incidents, we can forge better relationships with those impacted and build stronger cases for prosecution.”

- Mirtha V. Ramos, Chief, DeKalb County, Georgia, Police Department



“For almost four decades, Genesis Women’s Shelter & Support has partnered closely with the Dallas Police in efforts to provide safety and recovery for survivors of domestic and sexual violence, while holding accountable perpetrators of these devastating crimes. We believe strongly that each response is a critical response and requires not only a trauma informed approach but also one where gender bias is recognized and eliminated. We applaud the Department of Justice in their work to reduce biases among law enforcement agencies knowing that an appropriate response can help create communities where crimes of domestic and sexual violence are greatly reduced and survivors can attain the justice they so deserve.”

- **Jan Langbein, Chief Executive Officer, Genesis Women’s Shelter and Support, Dallas, Texas**

“This guidance is powerful and easy for departments and communities to navigate and measure their efforts to meet today’s new standards, expectations, and demands for justice in sexual assault and domestic violence response. It is a great tool for law enforcement agencies and their community partners. Review the guidance together and compare with your current policies, SOPs, and training curriculums, and look for ways the guidance can assist in enhancing your efforts to ensure equal protection of the law for all.”

- **Tom Tremblay, Chief (retired), Burlington, Vermont, Police Department**

“Everyone working with victims and survivors of abuse must continuously hold up a mirror to make sure we are responding with appropriate compassion and care. I applaud the Department of Justice for being willing to develop and promote best practices that are inclusive, informed, and victim-centered.”

- **Tracy Prior, Chief Deputy District Attorney, San Diego, California, District Attorney’s Office**

“The brilliant Elie Wiesel said, ‘Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.’ So it is with gender-based violence – when human dignity is in jeopardy, we must all stand up and speak up to acknowledge and address the biases and imbalances of power that make some of our neighbors feel less safe and underserved because of who they are. It is a moral imperative.”

- **Fred Fletcher, Chief (retired), Chattanooga, Tennessee, Police Department**

Links related to the guidance and the announcement:

- Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) [landing site for the guidance](#)
- The [guidance](#)
- A [four-page summary version](#) of the principles set forth in the guidance
- An [annotated resource list](#) with pertinent training and tools
- [DOJ press release](#) announcing the updated guidance
- [Associate Attorney General Vanita Gupta’s remarks](#) announcing the guidance
- [Fact sheet](#) summarizing the guidance