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# Advocates for Domestic Violence Prevention Converge on Capitol

"It is time that Georgia follows our neighboring states and enacts legislation to help keep victims of domestic violence safe and alive," said Jan Christiansen, executive director of Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

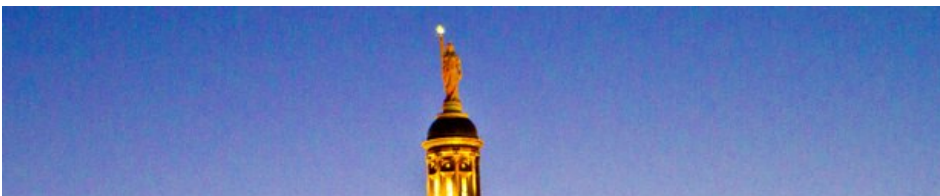
By **Katheryn Tucker** (<https://www.law.com/dailyreportonline/author/profile/Katheryn-Tucker/>) | February 04, 2020 at 05:10 PM

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*Georgia State Capitol. (Photo: John Disney/ALM)*

Hundreds of advocates for survivors of domestic and sexual violence gathered at the Capitol Tuesday to urge the Georgia General Assembly to restrict access to guns by those with misdemeanor family violence convictions.

"The data shows us this type of legislation saves lives," Jan Christiansen, executive director of Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence, said in a news release following a rally that drew hundreds of activists.

Georgia ranks 10th-worst in the nation for the rate at which women are killed by men, according to statistics Christiansen cited. Between 2010 and 2019, nearly 1,000 Georgians were killed by firearms in domestic violence incidents. Yet Georgia has not

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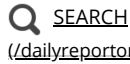
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aligned with federal law or neighboring states to make gun or ammunition possession a felony for domestic violence perpetrators subject to a Family Violence Protective Order or convicted of a family violence-related misdemeanor, the release noted.

"Every neighboring state in the Southeast, including Alabama, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina and Florida, has enacted legislation limiting perpetrators access to firearms," she said. States that have such laws report an 8% to 13% reduction in intimate partner homicide rates and a 25% reduction in intimate partner gun homicides, she added.

"It is time that Georgia follows our neighboring states and enacts legislation to help keep victims of domestic violence safe and alive. Safety is a right that everybody deserves," Christiansen said.

Christiansen's group was joined by others for an event billed as "Stop Violence Against Women Day." They gathered first at a church near the Capitol and heard from survivors of intimate partner gun violence—some of whom spoke from wheelchairs after being paralyzed by gun violence.

The advocates also spoke in support of Senate Bill 287, which would eliminate the statute of limitations on offenses of rape, aggravated sodomy and aggravated sexual battery. And they called on the state to include dating partners—not just those married or cohabiting—under the protection of family violence laws. They said dating partners account for half the intimate partner violence.

"This revision to our law will support a victim centered approach to sexual violence," Jennifer Bivins, president of Georgia Network to End Sexual Assault, said in the news release. "Victims who need time to decide if they want to move forward within the criminal justice system will have that time. Victims deserve time to decide."

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## Katheryn Tucker

( <https://www.law.com/dailyreportonline/author/profile/Katheryn-Tucker/> )

Katheryn Hayes Tucker is an Atlanta-based reporter covering legal news for the Daily Report and other ALM publications.

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"Traveling across our state, I have talked to many survivors," Marty Kemp said in a joint news release with her husband. "I have assured them that Georgia is listening to them, and now - through this legislation - we are finally giving them a voice."

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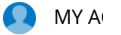
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