

Empower women, not their abusers

If you were running a women's domestic violence shelter, who would you turn away? An immigrant woman who may find herself deported if she testifies against her abuser? A



BY ANNEY BOLGIANO
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transgender woman, who is statistically likely to be turned away? Perhaps your shelter is on Indian land, and you know that tribal law will have no jurisdiction over an Native American woman's non-Native American partner — what do you do now?

Maybe you could find a way to help these women, maybe you couldn't, but the Violence Against Women Act reauthorization of Section 47 Assault of the Offences against the Person Act currently under consideration in the Senate won't take any chances.

The bill, originally passed in 1994 and last reauthorized in 2005, is in need of an update. The proposed bill in the Senate strengthens protection for marginalized groups. In the last Congress, the issue was politicized and lawmakers chose playing political football over saving women's lives. Enough is enough.

In the Senate on Feb. 7, lawmakers emphasized the importance of the reauthorization.

"Four out of five perpetrators (of domestic violence) on American Indian lands are non-Indians and currently cannot be prosecuted by tribal government," said Sen. Amy Klobuchar

(D-Minn.). Section 47 would extend Tribal court criminal jurisdiction to non-Indians in cases of domestic violence.

Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) expressed concern for undocumented immigrant women experiencing abuse.

The U-Visa program would allow those who were abused to stay in the country, regardless of immigration status, to help prosecute their abuser.

"If an undocumented woman walks into a domestic violence shelter ... will we help her?" asked Durbin. "Some say 'No, she's undocumented' ... Is that who we are in America?"

I asked Associate Professor of Political Science Maria Rosales why she thinks this is an important issue for Guilford students. "There are a lot of women here," said Rosales. "Guilford students should follow issues that are related to social justice."

"It's incredibly important that all students — women and men alike — make your voices heard on this issue," said Senator Kay Hagan (D-N.C.) in an email interview.

Hagan, a co-sponsor of Section 47, stresses the importance of the legislation to college students, who are at especially high risk of sexual abuse and violence, saying, "The 'Campus Program' provides grants to colleges and universities to implement co-ordinated community responses."

Hagan is confident the bill will pass in the Senate. Most concern lies in the House.

"We need to send a clear message to the House that anything short of passage is

unacceptable," said Hagan.

"In every area where women are fighting for their rights and their choice and their protection from abuse, it has come to a fight without bipartisan support," said Carol Rosenblatt, executive director of the Coalition of Labor Union Women.

Let's keep our eyes on VAWA reauthorization as it moves through the Senate And tell the House we will not be satisfied with a bill that turns its back on so many of our sisters.



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This Week's STAFF EDITORIAL

Valentine's Day is over, so what next?

Whether your main squeeze was expecting flowers, you surprised an unsuspecting muse or you sent that, "I've been thinking about you" booty-call text to your first-year sweetheart, you had decisions to make. Whatever you chose, do not underestimate the weight of your Valentine's Day choices. Now that the day is over, let's discuss a few things.

For monogamous couples, planning your night was easy: silence your phone, go out to eat, drink some wine, avoid discussing past lovers or pushing any other proverbial "buttons," perhaps avoid eating dairy products, and then conclude your evening peacefully while cuddling on a blanket, driving around town, frolicking in a field, going to bed early, or checking in at work.

But the challenge was much greater for single folks.

Every decision means something more than it does at face value. Beware of the weight of your words on this day; you might have ended up proposing when all you really wanted was a one-night-stand.

You must also be on constant alert. Did your Binford Boytoy expect dinner? Did your Milner Mistress wake you up shooting flower petals from a leaf blower? Was your Hildebrandt Honey mad that you'd rather stare at the Quakeria fish tank than listen to her read passages from "My Antonia"? Or did your weekend Wubba Woo decide Valentine's Day was the perfect time to take your relationship to the next level?

You can't run. You can't hide. Valentine's Day happened. Renegotiate the expectations of Valentine's Day with your girlfriend, boyfriend, partner, hubby or Googley Bear so you don't become a disappointment. Lower the standards before you fall short of the bar.

Where will you plant your seeds of love in 2013? Which plants will you choose to water and which plants will you let wither?

REFLECTING GUILFORD COLLEGE'S CORE QUAKER VALUES, THE TOPICS AND CONTENT OF STAFF EDITORIALS ARE CHOSEN THROUGH CONSENSUS OF ALL 15 EDITORS.

Gun control: stopping the violence

As a child, I lived in a rural part of Virginia where almost everybody I knew owned a gun. My family was one of the few that didn't.

Guns were a part of life that we had to deal with. I remember being told to wear orange during hunting season and to avoid accidentally wandering through the properties of those neighbors prone to pulling guns on trespassers.



BY JOSH BARKER
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When I was a teenager, I won the marksman award at Boy Scout camp. The leaders were shocked to hear that I had never shot a gun before. I have also not shot one since.

That is where I come from in the world of firearms. In this country, guns have saturated everyone's life.

The issue of gun control has always been a heated and emotionally driven one. The recent shootings in places such as Newtown, Conn., have brought it back to the forefront of the political conversation, inspiring the idea that something must be done.

I have always heard the cliché, "Guns don't kill people, people kill people." I believe this to be true, but I also don't think that we have to make it easier for people to kill by arming them.

This is why we must tighten up on gun control by making semi-automatic weapons and large magazines of ammunition illegal.

In reaction to the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, President Obama has proposed stricter gun laws and said in a speech about these laws, "I'll put everything I've got into this."

States including New York and California have instituted or are considering instituting similarly stricter gun laws.

On the other side, some are focusing on other parts of the conversation and argue that the country should focus on school safety and the way that we as a nation deal with mental illness, instead of on gun control.

Some are even asking for the arming of teachers. Giving teachers concealed pistols "cuts down on the 'school fortress' perception," wrote Michael Brown in The Christian Science Monitor.

Professor of Political Science George Guo thinks that the gun control

issue is different in the U.S. than in other countries. "The weapons business is very profitable," said Guo. "The U.S. Constitution is documentation to protect individuals, not just the government."

The Second Amendment was instituted in 1791, stating that "the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed."

"The Second Amendment was passed so that the people would have a way to fight back if the federal government overstepped its bounds," said senior Eamon Deeley-Wood. "Unfortunately, at this point in time the federal government has become so powerful that it's irrelevant."

The argument over gun control shows no signs of abating, and it's no wonder; like many important issues, gun control has no right or wrong answer. In fact, it has no easy answers at all.

Still, just because finding an answer isn't easy doesn't mean that we should allow a stalemate.

"Americans should be able to bear arms responsibly — that is with a background check," said CCE student and veteran Quentin L. Richardson, continuing on to say that we should "ban military-style weapons and their capacity to civilians."

"A witch hunt after gun laws and gun ownership is erroneous (for) the situation," said junior Darren Foster. "Where our attention should fall is to creating better laws that will punish those who buy and sell weapons illegally."

Guo thinks that in our increasingly isolated world the violence will continue, and in fact that, "it will become more severe in the future because you can't identify it."

At least everyone can agree that something is wrong and that something has to change. If only we could agree on what's wrong and how to change it.

Personally I must return to the above-mentioned cliché, "Guns don't kill people, people kill people." Unfortunately, no law will ever stop the situation entirely.

However, that doesn't mean that stricter laws won't diminish crimes and save lives. That may be all we can immediately hope for.

That's why making semi-automatic weapons and large magazines of ammunition illegal is the right first step in what will hopefully be a much longer process.