

# Mayor Bowser Announces The Protecting Victims Amendment Act of 2026

Mayor Bowser, in partnership with the United States Attorney for the District of Columbia, has announced the Protecting Victims Amendment Act of 2026. The Protecting Victims Amendment Act of 2026 aims to **enhance protections for domestic violence victims, strengthen accountability measures against offenders, and protect survivors' privacy and safety.**

## Strengthening Enforcement of Court Orders to Protect Victims

- Holds offenders accountable for repeated violations of temporary and civil protection orders by punishing repeated violations as felony offenses.
- Improves enforcement of stay away and no contact orders by providing courts with additional tools to enforce serious violations of release conditions, including a presumption that they should securely hold a defendant when they commit a new crime against the same victim.
- Strengthens consequences for violations of post-conviction stay away and no contact orders in misdemeanor intrafamily offenses and misdemeanor sex offenses by making a violation of these orders a felony with penalties consistent with other felony cases.

## Strengthening Pretrial Detention of Domestic Violence Offenders

- Provides courts with improved tools to protect victims of domestic violence by detaining abusers who harm them prior to trial, including:
  - Creating a new hold for individuals charged in an intrafamily offense who were, at the time of the offense, released pending trial or sentencing in another intrafamily offense case.
  - Giving courts the ability to detain offenders charged with a repeat violation of a protection order or felony threats against an intimate partner.
  - Giving courts the ability to detain offenders charged with an offense against an intimate partner who have a history of domestic violence or were subject to a protection order at the time of the offense.

## Enhancing Accountability for Domestic Violence Offenders

- Updates language in the District's kidnapping statute to more clearly state what the prohibited conduct is and to capture criminal conduct that the community would recognize as kidnapping and provides multiple ties of liability to address varied factual scenarios of different severity.
- Creates a felony version of unlawful entry to address circumstances in which an offender who has committed unlawful entry and is unlawfully in a private dwelling or property, then commits an assault or a crime of violence. Currently, DC law provides no criminal liability when a person unlawfully enters the home of another, or refuses to leave that home, and then commits an assault or a crime of violence.
- Creates an enhancement for sentencing purposes that applies to violence and threats where the offender knew or consciously disregarded a substantial and unjustifiable risk that the victim was pregnant.
- Creates a new offense to address circumstances in which the defendant committed certain offenses in the presence of a child, or where the child witnessed the offense, including by sight, sound, or otherwise.

## Protecting Victim and Survivor Privacy and Safety

- Amends the Metropolitan Police Department's public disclosure requirements by providing protection to individuals who are willing to come forward to law enforcement to report that they have been a victim of or witness to a crime.

## Do you or someone you know need help?

Get free and confidential information and referrals for all crime in the District. The DC Victim Hotline is available at **844-4-HELP-DC (844-443-5732)** and is a 24-hours a day 7 days a week, chat, and text-based resource and crisis line for all crime victims in the District of Columbia. Visitors to the hotline receive strength-based and trauma-informed services and referrals in over 200 languages. If you are in immediate danger, call **911**.