

**The Gun Owners of Vermont Inc.**  
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There were two parts of our testimony that was rebutted by a supporter of H.422 that we wish to indicate were not errors on our part.

**Point 1.** Gun Owners of Vermont testified that the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission report included the mention of the lone suicide of a perpetrator of domestic violence homicide, using a firearm, but omitted the fact that the suicide actually occurred in Kansas.

Heather Holter, VT Council on Domestic Violence, a member of the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission, testifying by telephone, refuted that fact, stating:

"The suicide that we actually spent our time reviewing last year was not the responsible party, there was some confusion about that earlier today, I wanted to clarify that."

The 2016 Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission Report stated on page 13, PART TWO:  
COMMISSION STATISTICAL DATA:

**"There was one suicide of a responsible party. This suicide involved a firearm."**

There was no confusion on our testimony, we were not referring to the case study.

Details: 6/8/2015 Windsor

Jason Kendall killed his girlfriend Molly Helland.

Kendall killed himself 3 days later in KANSAS, 1600 miles away, after a police pursuit.

<http://www.wcax.com/story/29296957/vt-murder-suspect-dead-of-self-inflicted-gunshot-wound>

**Point 2.** More importantly, testimony by The Vermont Federation of Sportsman's Clubs and Gun Owners of Vermont, BOTH indicated LARGE DISCREPANCIES in the total number of homicides in the 2016 Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission Report compared to the ACTUAL FBI data available online, for BOTH 2014 AND 2015.



The Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission Report states SIXTEEN HOMICIDES and the FBI data shows TEN.

The Federation called the point that the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission COMBINES homicides AND suicides to achieve their "total homicides."

Testimony by Heather Holter attempted to refute that discrepancy by stating,

"The reports can be very confusing to read, but I want to just clarify..."

"It is very clear in the Commission reports what are counted as homicides and what are counted as suicides... and they are not mixed up together."

Page 28, Appendix B, of the 2016 Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission report shows that "homicides" are indeed SUMMED TOGETHER under SEVERAL different categories.

Deaths of family or household members, deaths of bystanders, deaths of (AND by) Law Enforcement Officers, deaths by justifiable self-defense, and deaths by SUICIDE!

#### "APPENDIX B - COMMISSION DEFINITION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RELATED FATALITY

When determining whether a fatality is domestic violence related for data collection and/or full case review, the Executive Committee and the full Commission may consider the following criteria.

Whether:

##### **Family or Household Members**

- a. the responsible party was related to the victim as a "family member" according to the "plain and commonly accepted meaning" of the term.
- b. the responsible party and victim qualify as having a reciprocal beneficiaries relationship
- c. the responsible party and victim were related as "household members" under the Abuse Prevention Act
- d. the responsible party killed an estranged partner's current "household member"
- e. the responsible party killed a current partner's estranged "household member"
- f. the responsible party killed a family member's current or estranged "household member"

##### **Bystanders**

- g. the responsible party killed bystander(s) while attempting to harm family or "household members";

##### **Law Enforcement Officers**

- h. the responsible party is a law enforcement officer forced to kill in the line of duty when responding to a domestic violence incident;



i. a law enforcement officer is killed in the line of duty when responding to a domestic violence incident;

**Justifiable Homicides (self-defense)**

j. the fatality is domestic violence related but is ruled a justifiable homicide;

**SUICIDES!**

k. the fatality is a **murder-suicide** matter involving family or household members;

l. the fatality is a **suicide where there is documented history of domestic violence to include victim suicide; alleged perpetrator suicide** (as violent act in front of family or household members); **alleged perpetrator suicide by law enforcement** and **teen suicide**;

m. the fatality is a **substance abuse related death** (chronic abuse, **suicide**, overdose) that is related to domestic violence."

There was no misinterpretation by the Federation, nor, Gun Owners of Vermont.

All homicides, justifiable or not, accidental deaths of law enforcement, and suicides are ALL lumped together to achieve a larger "homicide" total.

**Heather Holter testified that suicides are NOT used in counting Domestic Violence Homicides.**

The 2016 Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission Report stated on page 13, PART TWO: COMMISSION STATISTICAL DATA

"100% of the domestic violence homicides in 2015 involved the use of a firearm. Of the total sixteen homicides, thirteen (81%) involved the use of a firearm."

**FBI shows 10 homicides in VT in 2015.**

**The DV Fatality Review Committee shows 16, 13 by firearm.**

FBI Uniform Crime Report, Table 20  
Murder by State, Types of Weapons, 2015

Total murders: 10

Total firearms: 8

Handguns: 2

Rifles: 4

Shotguns: 0

Firearms (type unknown): 2

Knives or cutting instruments: 0

Other weapons: 1

Hands, fists, feet, etc.: 1

If Vermont really had 50+% more homicides, we would not be ranked #1 safest state, but somewhere higher than New Hampshire at #4 (14 murders).

Manipulating data to achieve higher "body counts" in order to influence the passage of new legislation is dishonest and should NOT be used to push it through committee.

During her testimony, Heather Holter stated "this bill could make a really powerful change, with what amounts to a really small number of people, **we are a small state, there aren't a lot of domestic assaults**, but it could make the difference between life and death."



Auburn Watersong testifies we have **very high** domestic violence and this bill would disarm lots of abusers.

Heather Holter testifies that we do NOT have a lot of domestic assaults and this bill would only effect a small number of people.

Both of these people worked closely with the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission, yet have different analysis of the problem they are trying to solve?

H.422 is not being honestly supported by factual data, but driven by emotional testimony and "reports," quotes and "facts" from anti-gun organizations.

Just like all gun control bills in Vermont, H.422 is a solution in search of a problem.

We urge you to put H.422 back on the wall.

Bob DePino  
Vice President, Gun Owners of Vermont