Annual Legislative Impact Summary: Strengthening Oklahoma's Response to Domestic Violence

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The Oklahoma Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board (DVFRB) continues to play a critical role in improving victim safety and preventing domestic violence homicides across the state. Through its multidisciplinary review of domestic violence-related fatalities, the Board identifies systemic gaps, analyzes risk factors, and develops recommendations aimed at strengthening responses by law enforcement, the courts, healthcare providers, victim service organizations, and policymakers. The Board's work is designed to learn from tragic outcomes and promote coordinated community responses that reduce the likelihood of future deaths.

Over the years, the DVFRB has provided valuable data and recommendations that have informed training initiatives, public awareness efforts, enhancements to lethality assessment practices, improvements in offender accountability, and legislative reforms. Many of the issues identified by the Board, including the dangers of non-fatal strangulation, the importance of recognizing patterns of coercive control and repeated abuse, the need for victim-centered interventions, and the necessity of evidence-based risk assessment, have increasingly gained recognition among policymakers and criminal justice professionals.

The 2026 legislative session reflects continued attention to several long-standing priorities consistent with the Board's findings and recommendations. Significant legislative gains included the enactment of GPS monitoring requirements for certain high-risk domestic violence offenders, expanded admissibility of prior domestic violence acts as evidence in court, and a broader statutory definition of "great bodily injury" that better reflects the severity of injuries commonly associated with domestic violence. While not all proposed measures were successful, the session demonstrated growing awareness among legislators of the unique lethality risks associated with intimate partner violence and the need for enhanced victim protection.

In addition to legislative accomplishments, state funding was secured for the Oklahoma Child and Adolescent Survivor Initiative (OCASI), a specialized program that will provide trauma-informed mental health services to children affected by intimate partner violence-related homicide and attempted murder. This investment recognizes the far-reaching impact of domestic violence on surviving family members and reflects a broader commitment to prevention, intervention, and healing.

Together, the outcomes of the 2026 legislative session represent meaningful progress toward many of the goals consistently identified through the work of the DVFRB. Although challenges remain, these efforts demonstrate how fatality review findings can be translated into policy, practice, and resource development that strengthen Oklahoma's response to domestic violence and enhance safety for victims and their families.

Status of DVFRB-related bills during the 2026 legislative session

- SB 1325 – Domestic Violence Offender GPS Monitoring (Status: Passed: Approved by Governor 5/11/26)
  - Bill Authors: Sen. Bill Coleman and Rep. Toni Hasenbeck
  - Background: Requires a defendant charged with domestic abuse by strangulation, with a dangerous/deadly weapon, or after a prior domestic abuse adjudication to not be released on bail unless they wear a GPS monitoring device until the end of their case. It requires the defendant to pay for the cost of the device.
  - OAG Government Affairs Update: Mr. Wolf stated that this bill, while appearing straightforward and of common sense, was difficult to get through the legislative process because of concerns among legislators about wrongfully accused suspects.
- HB 4342 – Domestic Violence Propensity Evidence (Status: Passed: Vetoed by Governor, Veto overridden by the House and Senate)
  - Bill Authors: Speaker Pro Tempore Anthony Moore and Sen. Todd Gollihare
  - Background: Allows prior instances of domestic violence abuse to be used as admissible evidence in court proceedings.
  - OAG Government Affairs Update: Mr. Wolf stated that the DV Propensity bill was vetoed by the Governor, but the veto was overridden by the Legislature, one of only 5 veto overrides this session. Mr. Wolf noted that this was a victory for the legislative affairs team, given that this was a priority of the District Attorney Council (DAC) for several years.

This bill will enable judges and juries to accept patterns of prior domestic violence in current cases.

- SB 1264 – Expands the definition of "Great Bodily Injury" (Passed: Signed by the Governor 5/29/2026)
  - Bill Authors: Sen. Christi Gillespie and Rep. Nicole Miller
  - Background: Expands the definition of "Great Bodily Injury" to include concussions, prolonged pain, and injuries affecting more than 10% of the victim's body, and covers cases committed in the presence of a minor.

OAG Government Affairs Update: Mr. Wolf stated that Oklahoma's current statutes have a narrow definition of "great bodily injury," and SB 1264 expands the definition to include prolonged pain or significant discomfort, concussion, and injuries to more than 10% of the body, and updates statutory language relating to domestic assault to match the felony classification system.

- HB 3264 – Domestic Abuse by Strangulation as an 85% (Status: Did not pass)
  - Bill Authors: Rep. John George and Sen. Kristen Thompson
  - Background: Makes domestic abuse by strangulation an 85% crime, which requires those convicted to serve 85% of their sentence before they are eligible for release.
  - OAG Government Affairs Update: Mr. Wolf stated the passage of this bill was unsuccessful. He suggested reframing the discussion around strangulation, referring to it as attempted murder instead, which could ease the path forward to legislative approval.
- HB 3763 – Requiring annual domestic violence training for Oklahoma law enforcement officers (Status: Did not pass)
  - Bill Authors: Rep. Tim Turner and Senator Warren Hamilton
  - Background: Requires full-time peace officers to receive a mandatory two hours on domestic violence, intimate partner violence, and lethality assessment protocol issues as a part of the officers' annual continuing education requirements. Every active reserve peace officer must receive a mandatory one hour of continuing education on domestic violence, intimate partner violence, and lethality assessment protocol issues annually.
  - OAG Government Affairs Update: This bill was not heard because of opposition by CLEET and law enforcement associations to any additional mandatory training. CLEET would be amenable to additional DV training if it were not statutorily authorized. Discussions on this topic will continue into the next session.
- State appropriations funding for the Oklahoma Child and Adolescent Survivor Initiative (OCASI)
  - Background: OCASI will be a specialized program providing comprehensive, trauma-informed, mental health services to children impacted by intimate partner violence (IPV)-related homicide and attempted murder.
  - OAG Government Affairs Update: Mr. Wolf stated a total of $425,000 was secured for OCASI's deployment ■

OACNS

Followers Wanted: The Hidden Skill of Great Leaders



Tammy Hanks, DNP, APRN, PCNS-BC, NEA-BC, EBP-C, CNOR

Most nurses aspire to become better leaders. We pursue certifications, advanced degrees, formal leadership roles, and opportunities to influence change. We learn to communicate effectively, navigate conflict, inspire others, and move ideas into action. Leadership is a common professional aspiration; followership rarely is.

At first glance, that may seem reasonable. In a culture that celebrates influencers, thought leaders, and social media followings, being a "follower" does not sound especially aspirational. The term can suggest compliance, passivity, or simply carrying out what someone else has decided.

Yet when I think about the strongest leaders I have worked with, I often find myself thinking about the followers around them—not the people who simply agreed with them, but the people who challenged them.

The colleagues who asked difficult questions. The ones who identified blind spots. The people willing to say, "I see it differently," or, "Is there a better way?" They strengthened good ideas, improved weak ones, and occasionally prevented poor decisions.

It raises an important question: what if one of the most essen-