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City, County leaders launch initiatives to streamline the criminal justice system and improve education surrounding domestic violence

Actions come in response to a community survey and Big Table where residents and advocates identified key areas for improvement in services, education, and efficiency

COLUMBUS, OH— Today, Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein, Franklin County Prosecuting Attorney Shayla D. Favor, and Columbus Mayor Andrew J. Ginther's Office of Violence Prevention Director Rena Shak launched two initiatives to combat domestic violence in Central Ohio. The initiatives include a task force to improve the effectiveness of the judicial system in handling domestic violence cases, as well as a yearlong public education campaign to better connect residents with information and resources.

“There are pain points in our justice system that make it harder to hold violent people accountable and easier for survivors to fall through the cracks,” said **Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein**. “We’re launching the Domestic Violence Task Force to look at and address these issues so we can streamline the system and improve outcomes to hold offenders accountable, promote rehabilitation, and connect survivors with the help and resources they need at critical moments in their lives. This is an important next step for public safety and criminal justice reform in our City.”

Wednesday’s launch follows feedback from the City’s Community Perceptions Survey* and discussions held during a Big Table in October 2025 that focused on the state of domestic violence in Central Ohio. In both forums, issues with access to information, resources and an overly complicated justice system surfaced as common themes.

“Through both the community survey and the Big Table conversation, our residents were unequivocal about what they need,” said **Franklin County Prosecuting Attorney Shayla D. Favor**. “Domestic violence is a growing and increasingly deadly crisis, and we cannot allow gaps in our justice system or barriers to information put more lives at risk. This public education campaign, alongside the work of the Domestic Violence Task Force, is about empowering survivors, families, and bystanders with knowledge, and ensuring that knowledge translates into action that saves lives.”

City Attorney Klein, County Prosecutor Favor, and Director Shak [announced the launch in a video](#) shared across their social media platforms Wednesday morning.

“There is no one-size-fits-all solution to the dynamic issue of violence, including domestic violence. That is why it is so incredibly important to work together in this space, including addressing the rise in domestic violence-related homicides in Columbus. Each of our offices contributes to this work in a significant way, and we’re committed to fostering sustainable change across Columbus and Franklin County. This campaign moves beyond awareness into education and action, supplying residents of varying ages with the tools to resource themselves and others,” said **Columbus Office of Violence Prevention Director Rena Shak.**

Among the initiatives announced Wednesday are:

A Domestic Violence 101 Education Campaign, a yearlong digital public education campaign led by the Franklin County Prosecutor’s Office, Columbus City Attorney’s Office, and the City’s Office of Violence Prevention to increase community understanding of domestic violence, strengthen prevention efforts, provide education of the court process and connect residents to critical resources. Residents can find the campaign posts on all three offices’ social media pages.

Several in person community events throughout the year aimed at improving education through training and connecting residents to resources. Events include engaging students at a local high school on teen dating violence, a reconvening of the Big Table with community stakeholders, and the City Attorney’s annual City Hall lighting ceremony for Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

A Domestic Violence Task Force led by City Attorney Klein and County Prosecuting Attorney Favor, which will bring together judges, prosecutors, agencies, law enforcement, city and county partners, and other key stakeholders to examine ways to improve and streamline the justice system for domestic violence cases in Franklin County. These partners will work together to identify opportunities and present a comprehensive plan for action.

The members of the Domestic Violence Task Force are:

- Columbus- City Attorney
- Columbus- City Council
- Columbus- Division of Police
- Franklin County - Administration
- Franklin County – Prosecuting Attorney
- Franklin County Common Pleas Court - Adult Probation
- Franklin County Court of Common Pleas- General Division (Administration and Judges)
- Franklin County Court of Common Pleas- Domestic Relations Division and Juvenile Branch
- Franklin County Municipal Court (Administration and Judges)
- Franklin County Municipal Court- Pretrial and Probation Services
- Franklin County Office of Justice Policy and Programs
- Franklin County- Public Defender
- Franklin County - Sheriff’s Office
- Lutheran Social Services- CHOICES for Domestic Violence
- Mayor’s Office of Violence Prevention

- The Center for Family Safety and Healing at Nationwide Children's Hospital

Here's what other community leaders and advocates are saying about Wednesday's announcement:

“Domestic violence impacts families, neighborhoods, and the safety of our entire community. It is not solely a law enforcement or city official issue. Friends, neighbors, and loved ones play a critical role in reporting concerns and supporting victims before violence escalates. This initiative will strengthen our shared commitment to intervention, education, and prevention,” said **Chief Elaine R. Bryant, Columbus Division of Police.**

“We are grateful to be a part of the Domestic Violence Task Force,” said **Melissa Kay Graves, president of The Center for Family Safety and Healing.** “Our team uses proven methods and works together across different fields to strengthen resilience, safety, and healing. With the integrated efforts of the task force, we can make an even greater impact in helping survivors of domestic violence and their families.”

“Addressing domestic violence requires all of us. Through coordinated systems, collaboration and education, we are working to streamline justice services, challenge harmful norms and strengthen the support networks that protect those at risk,” said **Ernest Stockton, Director, Franklin County Office of Justice Policy and Programs**

If you need immediate emergency assistance, please call 911. For other assistance, call the Center for Safety and Healing number: 614-722-8293 (8 a.m. – 8 p.m. M-F) or the National Domestic Violence Hotline (800) 799-SAFE (7233).