

FACT SHEET: Lindsay Ann Burke Act

WHO: On September 14, 2005, Lindsay Ann Burke, a 23-year-old graduate of Rhode Island College, was murdered after a 2-year struggle in an abusive relationship.

Determined to stop this cycle of abuse among teenagers, Lindsay's parents, Christopher and Ann Burke worked with Rhode Island legislators to create the Lindsay Ann Burke Act. As educators at schools in the state, the Burkes believe their daughter would want to break the silence and work towards ending relationship violence through education.

WHAT: LINDSAY ANN BURKE ACT: Proposed by Attorney General Patrick C. Lynch, on behalf of the Burke family, and sponsored by Sen. Beatrice A. Lanzi and Rep. Eileen S. Naughton, this law requires all school districts in Rhode Island to have a dating violence policy to address incidents of dating violence at school. In addition, it requires annual dating violence education in grades 7-12 through a health curriculum. Administrators and school staff in middle and high schools are required to attend dating violence awareness trainings, which are also strongly encouraged for parents.

The Lindsay Ann Burke Act was approved by the Rhode Island General Assembly on July 3, 2007 and became effective immediately.

WHY:

- 24 percent of 14 to 17-year-olds know at least one student who has been the victim of dating violence.
- Less than 25% of teens say they have discussed dating violence with their parents.
- More than 1 in 4 teenage girls in a relationship (26%) report enduring repeated verbal abuse.
- Nearly 1 in 5 teenage girls who have been in a relationship said a boyfriend had threatened violence or self-harm if presented with a break-up.

(Liz Claiborne Inc. study on teen dating abuse conducted by Teenage Research Unlimited, February 2005.)