

Address Confidentiality

Why it's Important:

- Survivors of domestic violence often **need to leave their residence in order to escape abuse** and it is vital the abuser not be able to find them. In order to keep survivors safe, it is important they remain hidden from their abuser.
- Amy Thomson's [story](#) highlights this: "Several months [after leaving] I was living with my mother, and I filed for divorce. My soon to be ex-husband opened my car door. He tasered me twice, pulled me out of the car, and dragged me 40 feet down a gravel driveway by my hair until finally stopping when the neighbors heard me screaming and came out yelling at him."

Current State of Confidentiality

- **Protection orders do not seem to be enough.** [Research](#) shows that on average, 40% of protective orders are violated.
- Most states have some sort of confidentiality law, however the specifics of the laws vary greatly by state. **Few states have protection for real estate dealings, when buying and selling property.**

Confidentiality and the Internet

- **Data sharing has made protecting survivors' identities much more difficult.** Often data sharing continues despite state and federal laws supporting survivor confidentiality.
- **Survivors may avoid being added to any searchable databases** like pictures, court records, or addresses.

Possible Solutions

- Harsher punishments for the violation of protection orders *could* help to minimize the frequency of violations. However, **preventative measures**, like electronic monitoring, have shown some [promise internationally](#).
- Expansion of the [Violence Against Women Act \(VAWA\) confidentiality provision](#). Specifically, expanding protection outside of governmental agencies.
- Solutions should be created with [nronerty law](#) victims' rights, and practicality of restrictions in mind

Key Takeaways

1. Confidentiality laws are vital to supporting the safety of survivors after escaping abuse.
2. Protection orders do not seem to be enough to stop future violence against survivors.
3. Real estate law should be taken into consideration when establishing confidentiality laws.
4. Online data sharing has complicated protecting survivors. This should be included in confidentiality laws.
5. Preventative measures against violating protective orders should be used when possible.