



LAWYERS CLUB
of San Diego

NEWS RELEASE

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Lawyers Club of San Diego Issues Statement on Asylum for Victims of Domestic Violence

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SAN DIEGO – Lawyers Club of San Diego opposes the recently announced federal policy disqualifying victims of domestic violence or gang violence from seeking asylum in the United States.

Lawyers Club, as part of its mission is to advance the status of women in the law and society, supports efforts to empower victims of domestic violence to seek and obtain refuge from their abusers. We also recognize that certain victims of domestic violence abroad can only obtain such refuge by leaving not only their homes, but also their home countries.

On June 11, 2018, U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions issued a precedential decision holding that “[g]enerally, claims by aliens pertaining to domestic violence or gang violence perpetrated by non-governmental actors will not qualify for asylum,” overruling a 2014 Board of Immigration Appeals opinion that did recognize such victims as eligible to seek asylum.

This decision fails to recognize the unique nature of gender-based harm and rejects three decades of progress by the international community in understanding that persecutors often wish to harm individuals based on their gender. As a result, many domestic violence asylum-seekers will face deportation back to the homes of their abusers within communities that are either unable or unwilling to protect them. This decision is an affront to basic expectations of decency, and it fails to recognize domestic violence as a human rights violation, one that disproportionately affects women. This decision runs counter to Lawyers Club’s core values, and Lawyers Club calls on the Attorney General to restore the policy of allowing victims of domestic violence to seek and potentially qualify for asylum in the United States.

About Lawyers Club of San Diego

Lawyers Club, founded in 1972 with the mission “to advance the status of women in the law and society,” has more than 1,300 members comprised of female and male attorneys, law students,

and others in the San Diego community who share Lawyers Club's interests and goals. For more information about Lawyers Club, visit www.lawyersclubsandiego.com.

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