



## DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

### News Release

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GOVERNOR

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#### **ORGANIZATIONS UNITE TO ANNOUNCE "STOP STALKING" CAMPAIGN IN HAWAII FREE KITS AVAILABLE FROM VERIZON WIRELESS GRANT**

HONOLULU- Attorney General Mark Bennett, The Domestic Violence Clearinghouse & Legal Hotline, Verizon Wireless and other community partners have joined together for a campaign to "Stop Stalking." The announcement was made today at the Department of the Attorney General.

Nationally, one in every 12 women and one in every 45 men will be stalked some time in their lifetime, according to the National Institute of Justice. An overwhelming majority of the victims was stalked by someone they knew — many by their intimate or former partner.

"Stalking is a crime of terror. It is one part threat and one part waiting for the threat to be carried out. The stalking victim has no way to resolve the threat and terror that she or he feels," said Attorney General Mark Bennett. "Stalking is defined as a course of conduct directed at a person that involves repeated visual or physical proximity, non-consensual communication, or verbal, written or implied threats, that would cause fear in a reasonable person. Our office is pleased to join forces in this collaborative effort to help put an end to stalking in Hawaii," he continued.

"Recognizing that many stalking behaviors may not appear to be criminal in nature if examined individually, we need to be able to view stalking in the broader context as a pattern of behavior that is criminal and dangerous," added Bennett. "Awareness and coordination of the law enforcement and victim services responders to these incidents are critical to assisting the victims and increasing their level of safety. In this regard, the Department of the Attorney General has developed a statewide protocol for responding to stalking incidents, and will be presenting a series of training events to criminal justice and advocacy agencies to increase recognition and response to stalking."

The statewide "Stop Stalking" awareness campaign is being aided by a generous grant from Verizon Wireless that will enable the distribution of free Stop Stalking kits.

"We are very concerned about the prevalence of women being stalked in Hawaii," said Nanci Kreidman, Executive Director of The Domestic Violence Clearinghouse & Legal Hotline. "Our goal is to increase awareness and provide women with the information they need to protect themselves. With Verizon Wireless<sup>1</sup> generous donation, we are able to provide kits packed with necessities that

will empower women to take charge and assist the agencies coming to their aid. The kit encourages women to document everything," Kreidman continued.

Each kit contains a flashlight, memo pad and pen, cell phone with access to 911, and an assortment of other documentation tools. Stalking kits are available by calling the Domestic Violence Clearinghouse and Legal Hotline at 531-3771 or toll-free 1-800-690-6200. Stop Stalking posters are also available. You & Me Naturally of Waipahu donated the bags for this campaign.

"Verizon Wireless is pleased to join the community in this unique and important initiative. We are hopeful that the Stop the Stalking kits will provide victims the tools and information they need to stay safe," said Mark Yamauchi, Verizon Wireless Director of Sales for Hawaii.

"While many stalkers don't attack, the threat of violence is suggested," added Kreidman. "Victims who aren't physically harmed still suffer in terms of fear, anxiety and the disruption to their daily lives."

Studies indicate the majority of victims have been in relationships with their stalkers, but a large percentage either never met their stalkers or were just acquaintances such as neighbors, friends or co-workers.

Also participating in the Stop Stalking campaign are all four County Prosecutors' Offices and Police Departments. The Hawaii County Department of Prosecuting Attorney was present at the announcement of the campaign start-up.

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