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Dismissal of Ray Rice Case is a Shameful Minimization of Violence Against Women

Alliance for HOPE International is deeply disappointed that the charges against Ray Rice, former Baltimore Ravens NFL running back, were dismissed today in New Jersey, said President Casey Gwinn today. "The law in New Jersey should be changed and no jurisdiction in America should be allowing domestic violence diversion," said Gwinn.

According to New Jersey's pretrial intervention website, the pretrial intervention program (PTI) is used in "victimless crimes" and criminal cases that do not involve "violence." Given the severity of Mr. Rice's violence and the charges filed against him, it is concerning that this program was ever presented, and accepted as an option.

Domestic violence crimes should NEVER be subject to diversion. California outlawed diversion in 1995 after the killing of Nicole Brown Simpson and all states should prohibit the use of diversion in violent domestic violence assaults. "This dismissal is a slap in the face to domestic violence victims and the professionals that work so hard to stop violent abusers across this country," said Casey Gwinn, former San Diego City Attorney and President of Alliance for HOPE International. The head of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Ruth Glenn, issued a statement today, saying: "This is an example of why victims don't come forward, why they do not feel safe, and why we still can't trust systems to hold perpetrators accountable. Until domestic violence is adjudicated as a violent crime and systems hold perpetrators accountable, victims of domestic violence will never be safe."

"Ray Rice's assault on Janay should have been treated as a serious felony. It was a life-endangering assault. Currently, cases with similar punches become murder cases if the victim dies. Why should it be dismissed as a "victimless" crime if the victim survives?," said Gwinn. Sadly, the court compounded its offense by also referring Rice to "anger management classes." "Domestic violence is not an anger issue. It is a choice to use violence against another human being."

As a pioneer in the prosecution of domestic violence cases, Casey Gwinn led the national effort to develop "evidence-based prosecution approaches in the mid-1980's and early 1990's that focused on prosecuting domestic violence cases even if the victim was not willing or able to participate in the prosecution of the case. Today, many jurisdictions across America continue to advocate for an aggressive approach to offender accountability while others put the responsibility on the victim or minimize the crime altogether.

Alliance for HOPE International is a national domestic violence prevention organization and seeks to increase access to services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault and their children while also increasing accountability for offenders in the criminal and civil justice systems.

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