

REPLY TO BALTIMORE SUN OP-ED

The July 16 op-ed by Holstein and Sacks missed the mark.

There is no indication that Steve McNair (the former professional football star allegedly shot by his wife) was a victim of the pattern of abuse, violence, isolation, resource deprivation, and control that is domestic violence. While men's abuse of women is a common precursor to intimate partner homicides of both men and women, there is no indication of prior abuse in this case.

Female perpetrated homicide-suicide is extremely rare. This is one reason this case has received so much media attention relative to intimate partner homicide-suicides with male perpetrators. The number of black men killed by intimates decreased 83% between 1976 and 2005, the largest decrease of any group. Experts attribute this drop to the increased availability of divorce, battered women's shelters, and legal developments like protection orders, which provide victims the tools they need to safely get away from their abuser. Ironically, Fathers and Families lobbies against these very advances.

McNair's death does highlight risk factors for homicide, including access to guns and thoughts of suicide. Comments about suicide should always be taken seriously and access to firearms increases the risk of death for all Americans.

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ANOTHER RESOURCE

The Minister Responsible for Women's Issues recently commissioned Walter Dekeseredy and Molly Dragiewicz to write a critique of gender neutral material in Canada. Please go to the following link for this report.

<http://www.citizenship.gov.on.ca/owd/english/resources/publications/violence.shtml>