

Domestic violence incidents down, but cases can move slowly and programs lack funds

August 12 2014, by Diane Jennings

When Texas police officers answer an emergency domestic violence call these days, they go armed with a gun—and a piece of paper.

The gun is for protection. So is the paper.

The paper contains information about shelters, counseling, hotlines and legal services and often is small enough to fit inside a shoe or a lipstick case—places abusers rarely check. But it's a big sign of how Texas laws have changed since [domestic violence](#) became a public health issue 35 years ago.

Experts say most of the laws needed to address domestic violence are on the books. But funding for enforcement, support programs and prevention is still lacking.

"We used to use the analogy 'If you hit your neighbor, you go to jail. But if you hit your wife, the cops would not even come,'" said Denise Margo Moy, deputy executive director of Texas Advocacy Project, a nonprofit that provides legal services to victims. "That doesn't happen anymore."...

"In the [19th century](#), men were allowed to do as they pleased and women were treated as property, as were children," says SMU Assistant Law Professor Jessica Dixon Weaver. "That's way back in our history. We have come a very long way since then." What domestic violence laws have changed over time and, on a practical level, are they working? Watch Weaver's explanation in this video:

Provided by Southern Methodist University

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