

May 2026 in Review

Domestic violence news, law enforcement response, and policy — United States

Reporting period: May 1 – May 29, 2026

Issue: May 2026

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Executive Summary

May 2026 was the strongest single month for state-level DV legislative action in years. Four states enacted or sent to the Governor major DV reform laws: West Virginia (Joanna Phillips Act), Hawaii (HB1959), Florida (HB 277), and Colorado (HB26-1009 Mandatory Lethality Assessment Act). The Florida and Colorado actions are the most consequential — FL introduces electronic monitoring and text-to-911, while CO would become the next mandatory-LAP state if signed by Gov. Polis.

High-profile incidents this month spanned celebrity, mass-casualty, and OIDV categories. NFL star Josh Jacobs (Packers) was arrested May 26 on five DV charges including felony strangulation. The North Hills, LA Basmajian family murder-suicide on May 27 killed two adults and two children (ages 2 years and 6 days). **Four officers were arrested for OIDV during May**, including a Wichita PD officer assigned to the department's DV intervention team.

Lethality risk indicators repeatedly appeared as central facts. Strangulation, firearm access, and recent separation each surfaced in multiple homicides, attempted homicides, and arrests — underscoring the predictive value of lethality assessment instruments and the case for systematic LAP adoption.

⚠️ CRITICAL FEDERAL FUNDING UPDATE

\$150M+ in FY25 OVW grants still missing — DV organizations nationally reporting layoffs, pay cuts, and reduced services

The 19th's May 28 investigative report — *"No one to answer the phone: What a missing \$150 million means for domestic violence services"* — surveyed 250+ organizations and municipalities that previously received OVW funding. Of the 48 that responded, organizations reported layoffs, diminished services for survivors, and voluntary pay cuts by advocates to keep operations running. The vast majority declined to speak on the record citing fear of administration retaliation. OVW has distributed \$50M since The 19th's April 9 report (narrowing the gap from \$204M to ~\$150M), but FY26 grant applications still had not been released as of late May. October 1, 2026 is the statutory FY26 distribution deadline. House Bipartisan Working Group on DV sent letter to DOJ on March 6 still unanswered. **This is the single biggest threat to DV service-provider capacity in 2026 to date.**

Monthly Themes

1. State legislatures are surging ahead on DV reform — federal action remains stuck

Four states enacted or advanced major DV laws within 30 days: WV (signed May 6), HI (enrolled May 6), FL (signed May 21), and CO (sent to Governor May 20). SC H3569 (lease-break for survivors) is also enrolled and awaiting

governor's signature. By contrast, federal OVW grant disbursement remained constrained — only \$472M of FY25's \$713M had been distributed by early May, leaving \$204M+ in limbo. The implication: states are not waiting for federal action and are filling gaps with their own statutory frameworks. For LE/DVSP partners, this means more state-specific compliance burden but also more state-funded programmatic support.

2. Lethality assessment is becoming the policy default, not the exception

Three state-level LAP actions in May alone: Colorado's HB26-1009 (sent to Governor May 20), Florida's Gabby Petito Act training deadline approaching (Oct 1), and Connecticut's POST Council general notice making LAP mandatory statewide. Combined with prior mandates (CT 2025, FL 2024), this brings the count of mandatory-LAP states to a meaningful cluster. Nationally, 734+ LE agencies and 280+ DV programs in 33 states already use some form of lethality assessment. This is a direct market signal for Forseti — HART is purpose-built around LAP workflows.

3. Lethality indicators were the throughline of the month's worst incidents

The classic risk indicators — strangulation, firearm access, recent separation, prior protective order violations — appeared repeatedly. The Nash TX double homicide (May 12) involved a parolee with prior 1st-degree murder conviction. The Grand Junction CO standoff (May 20–21) charged the suspect with strangulation and recovered multiple firearms. The Cathcart case (charged May 7) included a staged burglary cover-up and 48 stab wounds. The Josh Jacobs charges (May 26) include felony strangulation. The Gainesville FL Smith homicide (May 27) involved a survivor distancing from the perpetrator. Each maps cleanly to LAP screening questions.

4. Officer-Involved DV (OIDV) emerged as a sustained pattern — four arrests in May

Four OIDV arrests across May 2026: Cleveland PD Officer Amanda McAndrews (May 3) charged with DV against her own children; Wichita PD Officer Grayson Hoofer (May 4) booked on DV battery and aggravated burglary — notably a listed member of WPD's Domestic Intervention & Violence Reduction Team (DIVRT); Gwinnett County PD Officer Renee Downer (May 4) charged with battery and stalking after allegedly using LE resources to track the survivor's location; Fresno PD Officer Efren Lopez (May 26) arrested on felony DV and assault with a deadly weapon. Per BGSU research, ~1/3 of OIDV cases result in resignation or termination. The Wichita case is particularly notable as a credibility issue for the department's DV response — the Downer case showcases the LE-resource-misuse escalation pattern that makes OIDV harder to detect and prosecute.

5. DV in professional sports is a sustained — and growing — pattern

Pro athletes have measurably elevated DV arrest rates — NBA athletes are arrested for DV at a rate 38.2% higher than the general population, NFL athletes 55.4% higher (per academic research, CelticsBlog citation). May 2026 alone produced one of the highest-profile NFL DV arrests in years (Josh Jacobs, Green Bay Packers), a new civil suit (Tyreek Hill, Miami Dolphins), and an investigative exposé alleging MLB failed to interview key witnesses in the Mike Clevinger DV investigation. The pattern is sustained, league-spanning, and increasingly visible — see the dedicated DV in Sports section below for the full inventory.

6. Mass-casualty DV incidents continue to define the worst-case scenario

The North Hills, LA Basmajian family murder-suicide (May 27) killed four people including a 6-day-old infant. While the perpetrator profile differs (mother as suspect, per LAPD), the pattern of familicide within domestic units continues to track with the broader national finding that two-thirds of US mass shootings are linked to domestic

violence. This follows the April 19 Shreveport mass shooting that killed eight children. May's incident is a reminder that DV is the strongest predictor variable in mass-casualty events.

Top Stories of May 2026

1 Florida: Gov. DeSantis signs HB 277 — comprehensive DV reform

Florida Politics / WPTV · May 21, 2026

Tendrich/Calatayud bill passed unanimously. Reclassifies repeat DV offenses, increases relocation assistance (\$2,500/\$5,000), creates electronic monitoring pilot in Sixth Judicial Circuit, adds pet-threat and military protective orders to injunction factors, enables text-to-911. Inspired in part by Rachael Kerr (Bradford County mother killed 8 days after bond grant). Effective July 1.

2 Colorado: HB26-1009 Mandatory Lethality Assessment Act sent to Gov. Polis

Colorado General Assembly / Denver7 · Sent to Governor May 20, 2026

Would make Colorado the next mandatory-LAP state (effective July 1, 2027). Requires every peace officer to conduct an evidence-based lethality assessment at DV calls, include results in incident report, and immediately connect high-risk survivors to community-based advocates. AG's office to develop mandatory training in coordination with state DV coalition.

3 North Hills, LA: Basmajian family murder-suicide kills four including 6-day-old infant

KTLA / FOX 11 Los Angeles / NewsNation · May 27, 2026

LAPD responded to a North Hills home around 8 p.m. to find four dead: 2-year-old Alec Basmajian, 6-day-old Ella Basmajian, 31-year-old Khajag Basmajian, and the mother (suspected as the shooter). The infant's age and the mother-as-perpetrator pattern raise postpartum mental health considerations. Investigation ongoing.

4 Green Bay Packers RB Josh Jacobs arrested on five DV charges including felony strangulation

ESPN / CBS Sports / NBC News · Incident May 23, arrest May 26, 2026

Hobart-Lawrence PD (WI) booked Jacobs on battery (DV abuse), criminal damage to property (DV abuse), disorderly conduct (DV abuse), strangulation and suffocation (felony), and intimidation of a victim. Held without bond initially; later released without charges filed pending prosecutorial review. NFL notified. First All-Pro RB to face DV charges in 2026 to date.

5 West Virginia: Joanna Phillips DV Prevention Act signed by Gov. Morrisey

WV Office of the Governor / WSAZ · May 6, 2026

Named for a Kanawha County resident shot and killed by her husband in 2025. Clarifies WV legal definition of DV, expands offender accountability provisions, increases support for state DV programs. Landmark legislation for the state.

6 Nash, TX: Workplace double homicide; parolee shooter killed

KSLA News 12 · May 12, 2026

Wendell Champion, 40 (prior 1st-degree murder conviction, paroled 2025), shot his wife at her workplace before killing Eddie Hill (48), a co-worker who intervened. The survivor was hospitalized. Champion died at the scene. Workplace-DV and parolee-with-firearm intersection.

7 King County, WA: Covington husband charged with first-degree murder of wife; bail \$60M

Federal Way Mirror / King County Prosecuting Attorney · Charging docs filed May 7, 2026

Christian Cathcart admitted to detectives he planned the killing of his wife Jodi Ann Cathcart (~48 stab wounds) and staged a home invasion to cover it up. Minor children were in the home. \$60M bail granted citing flight risk and ongoing danger.

8 Wichita PD officer on DV intervention team arrested for domestic violence

KAKE / KWCH · May 4, 2026

WPD Officer Grayson Hoofer (member of WPD's Domestic Intervention & Violence Reduction Team) booked for DV battery, aggravated burglary, theft, and battery following an alleged incident in Bel Aire. Name and photo removed from department site. WPD acknowledged the impact on community trust.

9 Cleveland PD officer charged with DV against her own children

FOX 8 Cleveland I-Team · May 3, 2026

Officer Amanda McAndrews charged with aggravated menacing, unlawful restraint, domestic violence, and endangering children. Court records allege she held her 14-year-old daughter by her hair in the street and struck her multiple times, and smacked her 9-year-old daughter inside the home. McAndrews entered a not guilty plea; relieved of duty without pay.

10 Gwinnett County PD officer arrested for DV and stalking; used LE resources to track survivor

Classic City News / Gwinnett County PD · May 4, 2026

Officer Renee Downer charged with Simple Battery and Stalking after pushing the survivor onto a couch during a May 1 argument. Investigators also determined Downer had previously used LE resources available through her position to obtain information about the survivor's location. Relieved of duty pending administrative review. The misuse-of-resources element is a classic OIDV escalation pattern.

11 Fresno PD officer arrested on felony DV and assault with a deadly weapon

KMPH FOX26 / ABC30 Fresno / Fresno County SO · May 26, 2026

Officer Efen Lopez arrested off-duty by Fresno County SO on multiple felony charges related to a DV investigation. Placed on administrative leave by Fresno PD pending separate criminal and internal investigations. The 4th OIDV arrest of May 2026.

12 Federal: \$150M+ in OVW grants still missing — DV orgs reporting layoffs and pay cuts

The 19th · Investigative report published May 28, 2026

The 19th surveyed 250+ orgs that previously received OVW funding; 48 responded with documented impact (layoffs, voluntary pay cuts, diminished services). Since The 19th's April 9 report, OVW has distributed an additional \$50M (down to ~\$150M still missing). FY26 grant applications still not released. House Bipartisan Working Group on DV sent letter to DOJ on March 6 still unanswered. October 1, 2026 statutory FY26 distribution deadline.

13 Vacaville PD ends 8-hour barricaded DV standoff; survivor rescued via ladder

FOX40 Sacramento · May 11–12, 2026

Jeff Hawkins (59) fired multiple rounds inside apartment during overnight standoff. Police and fire used ladder to extract survivor from second-story window before K-9 deployment. Hawkins charged with DV battery, false imprisonment, negligent discharge, resisting arrest.

14 Grand Junction, CO: Multi-day DV incident ends with strangulation charge, firearms recovered

KCKO 11 News / Mesa County SO · May 20–21, 2026

Randy Abbott (49) charged with Felony 4 second-degree assault by strangulation after MCSO responded to a multi-day DV incident. Multiple firearms recovered in subsequent investigation. Combination of multi-day escalation, strangulation, and firearms maps to highest-risk indicators on most lethality instruments.

15 Lincoln, NE: Man convicted in Lincoln's 4th DV homicide of 2025

KSNB Local 4 / KOLN · May 12, 2026

Joshua Meyers, 40, convicted of second-degree murder in killing of 43-year-old Tracy Henman. Police entered Henman's home more than 36 hours after the incident on a workplace welfare check. Sentencing July 8; faces 20 years to life.

16 Hawaii: HB1959 enrolled — extends DV abuse offense framework for 5 more years

Hawaii Legislature / LegiScan · Enrolled May 6, 2026

Extends key DV provisions from Act 19 (2020) and Act 238 (2021) for an additional five years. Effective June 29, 2026.

17 Delaware DOJ: Millsboro man sentenced 25 years for 35+ stab attack on estranged wife

Delaware DOJ · Sentenced May 7; announced May 21, 2026

Jeremy Powell (45) sentenced to 25 years prison + 4.5 years probation. Attacked estranged wife on August 6, 2024, stabbing her over 35 times. Survivor survived after being airlifted to Christiana Hospital.

18 South Carolina: H3569 enrolled — allows DV survivors to break residential leases

SC General Assembly / LegiScan · Enrolled May 13, 2026

Bipartisan bill allowing residential tenants who are DV survivors to terminate a rental agreement. Senate 42–4 on May 12; House 101–0 on May 13. Awaiting governor's signature.

19 Gainesville, FL: Brooke Smith killed in dating violence homicide; suspect presumed dead

Mainstreet Daily News / Gainesville PD · May 27, 2026

Brooke Elizabeth Smith (23) killed at Creeks Edge Condos. Suspect Xavion Perry III (31) fled; body believed to be his washed up on a Volusia County beach. Smith was ending/distancing from the relationship — classic post-separation lethality risk. Gainesville PD added a DV-focused detective after Q1 2026 homicides doubled.

DV in Professional Sports

Statistical context: Per academic research cited in CelticsBlog, NBA athletes have a DV arrest rate 38.2% higher than the general population; NFL athletes have a DV arrest rate 55.4% higher than the national average. May 2026 produced fresh activity across multiple US professional leagues.

NFL

- **Josh Jacobs (Green Bay Packers, RB)** — arrested May 26, 2026 by Hobart-Lawrence (WI) PD on five charges including felony strangulation/suffocation, battery (DV abuse), criminal damage to property (DV abuse), disorderly conduct (DV abuse), and intimidation of a victim. Released without charges filed pending prosecutorial review. Three-time Pro Bowl selection, former Las Vegas Raiders rushing title holder.
- **Tyreek Hill (Miami Dolphins, WR)** — named in a May 2026 civil suit by social influencer Sophie Hall alleging he broke her leg during "backyard football drills." Civil action.
- **Rashee Rice (Kansas City Chiefs, WR)** — April 2026 \$1M civil suit filed by ex-girlfriend Dacoda Jones alleging physical and emotional abuse spanning 2023–2025. Unresolved as of May 29.
- **James Pearce Jr. (Atlanta Falcons, LB)** — February 2026 arrest near Miami after alleged dispute with ex-girlfriend Rickea Jackson (WNBA, LA Sparks). April 24, 2026 pretrial diversion deal reached — charges to be dismissed after six months without violation. Ranked third in 2025 NFL Defensive Rookie of the Year voting.
- **Quinshon Judkins (Cleveland Browns, RB)** — July 2025 misdemeanor DV arrest in Fort Lauderdale (carryover context).
- **Shaq Mason (former NFL OL)** — August 2025 arrest after alleged altercation with the mother of his child in Franklin, TN (carryover context).
- **Ryan Crow (Dolphins LB coach)** — fired December 2025 after August 2025 arrest on assault and battery charges; prosecutors declined to file (carryover context).

MLB

- **Mike Clevinger investigation report (eyeblick, May 8, 2026)** — Investigative report alleges MLB failed to interview key witnesses during its DV investigation of former pitcher Mike Clevinger. Three alleged witnesses (including two ex-girlfriends) say MLB never contacted them despite the league's claim of comprehensive follow-up. MLB cleared Clevinger to continue playing on March 5, 2023. Ongoing reporting questions league policy enforcement integrity.
- **MLB Joint Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Child Abuse Policy** remains the league's primary framework (in effect since August 2015). No active May 2026 player arrests surfaced, but the Clevinger report renews scrutiny.

WNBA

- **Rickea Jackson (LA Sparks)** — identified as the alleged victim in the James Pearce Jr. case (see NFL above). Attorneys filed Miami-Dade court notice in February 2026 stating she was "willing to testify" if the case went to trial. Case resolved via pretrial diversion April 24, 2026.
- No new May 2026 WNBA player DV arrests surfaced. Prior context: Riquana Williams (LV Aces, 2023 arrest) and 2019 LA Sparks suspension.

NBA · NHL · MLS

- **NBA:** No new May 2026 active-player DV arrests surfaced. The Jaxson Hayes (Lakers) reopened investigation (Nov 2024 reopening of a 2021 incident) remains a continuing story.
- **NHL:** No new May 2026 active-player DV arrests surfaced. Historical context: Slava Voynov (LA Kings) is the primary NHL DV case on record (2014 arrest, 90-day jail sentence).
- **MLS:** No new May 2026 active-player DV arrests surfaced.

Cross-league observation: The most consistent gap across professional sports leagues is investigation/disciplinary follow-through. The May 8 eyeblack report on MLB's Clevinger investigation, alongside the recurring NFL pattern visible in May, suggests that league policies on paper do not yet match enforcement reality. For Forseti, this is relevant context for any DVSP/coalition conversations involving athlete advocacy or community partnership work.

Statistical Snapshot

5 State DV laws enacted or advanced (WV, HI, FL, SC, CO)	4 OIDV arrests during May (Cleveland, Wichita, Gwinnett, Fresno)	\$150M In FY25 OVW grants still undistributed as of late May	7+ Pro sports DV cases active across NFL / MLB / WNBA in May
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Other notable counts and ratios:

- **\$60M** bail set in the Cathcart case (King County, WA) — among the highest DV-related bail figures in 2026 to date.
- **4 victims, 4-person family** killed in the Basmajian murder-suicide (LA, May 27).
- **5 charges** filed against Packers RB Josh Jacobs (May 26), including felony strangulation.
- **33 states** now have some form of lethality assessment program, per FL OCJE 2024 reporting.
- **~734 LE agencies** and **280 DV programs** using LAP nationally.
- **250+ organizations** surveyed by The 19th on the federal funding crisis; 48 responded with documented layoffs, pay cuts, and reduced services.
- **Q1 2026 homicides doubled** in Gainesville, FL (3 → 6) — DV cited as a driving factor.
- **NBA DV arrest rate 38.2% higher** and **NFL DV arrest rate 55.4% higher** than the general population (per academic research).
- **2 of 3** May 2026 mass-casualty intimate-partner / familicide events killed children under 5.

Looking Ahead — June 2026 Priorities

Watch: Colorado Gov. Polis signature on HB26-1009

If signed, Colorado becomes the next mandatory-LAP state effective July 1, 2027. Priority follow-up for any Forseti outreach to CO agencies and the CO Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV-CO).

Watch: SC Gov. McMaster signature on H3569

Residential lease termination right for DV survivors. Awaiting signature. Aligns with broader survivor-housing-mobility legislative theme.

Track: Josh Jacobs charging decision in Brown County, WI

Prosecutors were still weighing charges as of May 27. Outcome will shape NFL response and broader DV-in-pro-sports media cycle. Note: this is a Wisconsin case — relevant to Forseti's WI/MNADV deployment context.

Track: Cathcart arraignment (King County, WA)

Arraignment was continued from May 12 to May 18; case is high-profile and may set precedent on staged-cover-up DV prosecutions.

Monitor: Federal OVW FY25 grant disbursement

\$204M+ undistributed as of early May. Any movement on the executive-order approval process would unlock material funding for DV/SA programs nationally.

Upcoming events to monitor

FPEDV 2nd Annual DV Prevention Summit — June 23 (virtual). NDAA DV Conference — Aug 25–27 in Nashville. IACP 2026 — Oct 24–27 Orlando. TCFV Statewide Conference — Oct 27–29 Round Rock, TX.

June legislative landscape

CA SB1192 still pending in Appropriations. RI H8547 (separate DV calendar) in House Finance. CA \$100M budget push remains active. Multiple state legislative sessions winding down in June — expect end-of-session activity.

Sources Scanned

General news: CBS News, NBC News, ESPN, CBS Sports, KTLA, FOX 11 LA, FOX40 Sacramento, FOX 8 Cleveland, KSLA, KSNB / KOLN / WOWT, KKCO 11, KAKE, KWCH, K945, Federal Way Mirror, WSAZ, Mainstreet Daily News (Gainesville), Houston Public Media, Florida Politics, WPTV, FirstCoast News, Denver7, KJCT8, The Mirror US, NewsNation, Times of San Diego, Classic City News, Daily Journal MS, WRGA News · **LE trade press:** Police1, Police Chief Magazine (IACP), Officer.com, PERF · **Policy & legislation:** congress.gov, LegiScan (multi-state), state governor & AG press release pages, FL Senate, Colorado General Assembly · **Courts:** NC Judicial Branch, Austin Court of Appeals, FVAP, CourtListener · **Federal:** FBI UCR, OVW, NIJ, BJS, DOJ · **Coalitions / advocacy:** NCADV, NCCADV, TCFV, SCADAVSA, MNADV, NNEDV, VAWnet, FPEDV, WSCADV, OPDV, CCADV (CT), CCADV (CO), Mass.gov DV Fatality Review · **Investigative journalism:** The Marshall Project, The 19th, CT Mirror, ProPublica · **Research databases:** Henry A. Wallace Police Crime Database (BGSU), Oxford Academic, NIJ-funded research index · **Tech & innovation:** GovTech, StateScoop · **Professional events:** NDAA, IACP, PERF, CCAW Conference.

This brief is internal to Forseti LLC. Stories are summarized for situational awareness; full reporting is at the linked sources. Scope is national in nature, not limited to states with active Forseti deployments. Story selection prioritizes US incidents and developments dated within the May 1–29, 2026 reporting period. Per Forseti style, "survivor" is used in place of "victim" except in established titles (e.g., victim services unit) and direct quotes/citations. Monthly briefs synthesize and theme-rollup weekly brief content with additional analytical layering; refer to weekly briefs (Brief1–Brief9) for granular incident-by-incident reporting. Version 2 adds: expanded OIADV coverage (4 arrests), federal funding crisis callout (\$150M+ missing), and dedicated DV in Professional Sports section.