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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Muncie Indiana - October is Domestic Violence Awareness month. Domestic violence is a subject that is tough to deal with and combat even under normal circumstances. Unfortunately, in the challenging environment of 2020 and the COVID pandemic, domestic violence incidents have skyrocketed. With fewer opportunities to get out of the house, economic uncertainty and less ability for friends and family members to check in on loved ones, it is no surprise that we are seeing spikes in domestic violence incidents. According to the Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence, DV related fatalities have increased 86 percent compared to the same time period last year. Given everything else that Hoosiers have had to deal with in 2020, that is simply a devastating statistic.

As your prosecutor here in Delaware County, I wanted to take a moment to raise awareness about domestic violence, especially this year, and offer some resources and potential solutions to help end this scourge in our community.

Make sure to safely check in on your friends, family, neighbors and acquaintances. Know the signs of potential abuse. Some are easier to identify than others, such as: bruises, black eyes or unexplained injuries, especially if the person you suspect might be a victim has constant excuses for those injuries. Others signs of physically or emotionally abusive and controlling relationships can be more difficult to spot. These may include: abrupt personality changes, loss of self-esteem, constantly checking in with their partner, constantly changing plans and not visiting family or friends, never having any money on hand, worrying about pleasing their partner, and more. If you think someone you know may be suffering from abuse, don't be silent. Talk to the person you are worried about and share your concerns. Listen to them and let them know that you care and are available to help. Continue to check in on them and don't be afraid to alert the authorities.

Our office takes domestic violence very seriously and we want to do everything we can to eliminate it in our county and state. In the past three weeks, our office has conducted three separate jury trials related to three separate crimes. All three defendants were convicted by juries of their peers. Two of the three defendants

were domestic abusers. The Delaware county Prosecutor's Office will continue to hold those who perpetrate domestic violence accountable for their actions.

Prosecutors statewide recently championed a bill to enhance penalties on strangulation, which is frequently seen with instances of domestic violence and can be a precursor to more violent incidents, including homicides.

For more information on how you can help, visit the Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence at icadvinc.org or the National Network to End Domestic Violence at nnedv.org.

Together, all Hoosiers can work to check on our friends, family and neighbors to ensure that we do our part to limit domestic violence in our state. Please take care of yourself and each other.

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