July/August 2025

SF Team News

Upcoming Events of Interest:

September 10, 2025: Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh's Director of Human Resources Allison Kacmar Richards and Director of Economic Impact Megan Rose are presenting at the Pittsburgh Human Resource Association 2025 Conference, People First: Embracing Change tHRough Community, in Cranberry, PA. The session, entitled Domestic Violence Comes to Work: Be Ready to Respond, is designed to help employers understand the financial, safety, and human costs of domestic violence in the workplace. Participants will leave this session better equipped with the tools necessary to provide job security and financial stability for survivors and a safer and more secure workplace for all. All sessions approved for 10 SHRM-CP & SCP and General (PHR) HRCI Professional Development Units (PDC). Full conference details available here: Conference Speakers - Pittsburgh Human Resources Association. Join us!

Thursday, October 30, 2025: Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh is hosting a 2-hour Continuing Legal Education panel addressing protections for survivors at home and at work at Pittsburgh's K&L Gates office.

Expected panelists include Brittany Mellinger, Fair Housing Training & Outreach Coordinator with the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission; Rachel Shepherd, Executive Director of the Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations, Megan Confer-Hammond, COO Fair Housing Partnership of Greater Pittsburgh; Erin Gibson Allen, Management-Side Labor and Employment Attorney and Non-Profit and Tax-Exempt Group Practice Co-Chair with Fisher Phillips; and Mike Pavlik, partner in K&L Gates' Labor, Employment, and Workplace Safety practice.

Scan the QR code to register or click here.

Family Care Act officially introduced in PA Senate

Senate Bill 906 has officially been introduced and has quickly garnered bipartisan support. Within a couple of weeks, 30 out of 50 senators have signed on in support — with more expected to join the list in the weeks ahead.

This is a remarkable and rare wave of support for a piece of legislation. The Family Care Coalition is grateful for the leadership of the bill's prime sponsor Sen. Devlin Robinson and the additional co-sponsors.

Want to learn more about how you can help make paid leave a reality for all in PA? Connect with us today and visit the Family Care Act website!

Five Reasons Organizations Need a Domestic Violence Plan

- To protect survivors:
  - 1 in 5 employed adults report being a victim of intimate partner violence
  - More than half say it affects their ability to work
  - 75% experience harassment from their abusers at work
- To protect their workforce:
  - Coworkers of survivors who are aware may experience anxiety & concern for their own safety
- To minimize risk & liability:
  - An organization can be exposed to lawsuits and workers' compensation claims, especially if there is no policy and/or plans in place to respond to issues
- To prevent increased health care costs:
  - Survivors may require medical attention, driving up the cost of the organization's medical insurance
- To minimize turnover & lost productivity:
  - DV impacts a survivors' ability to stay engaged at work, leading to decreased productivity and possible job loss
  - 99% of survivors experience financial abuse, therefore, an organization who has created a culture of support, compassion, empathy, and a focus on the physical & financial well-being of its employees will retain top talent and help survivors on their journey to financial stability and independence

To view more statistics: STANDING FIRM Fact Sheet
WC&S Understanding DV Statistics & Resources
National Domestic Violence Hotline

STANDING FIRM®

BUSINESS LEADERS POSSESS THE ABILITY TO TRANSFORM THE LIVES OF SURVIVORS.

TO BECOME A MEMBER, VISIT STANDING-FIRM.ORG

Thank you

Celebrating 15 Years of Guidance from the Advisory Council!

For over 15 years, STANDING FIRM has been honored to receive invaluable support from an Advisory Council made up of members from various local organizations in the Pittsburgh area.

On behalf of STANDING FIRM, we extend our heartfelt thanks for their dedicated service to the Advisory Council. Their insightful guidance has enabled STANDING FIRM to evolve from a small, independent organization to one that has found its home at the Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh.

Their knowledge, expertise, and dedication to assisting survivors of partner violence have been crucial to our success. We deeply appreciate their commitment to our mission of educating employers and their staff about the impacts of partner violence in the workplace and empowering each employee to become an advocate for survivors.

Their steadfast support and contributions have profoundly influenced our organization, and we truly could not have accomplished this without each of them. They have successfully met the goals set before them, and they should take pride in knowing their efforts have positively impacted many lives.

As we wind down the work of this Advisory Council, we eagerly anticipate collaborating in new and different ways with the wonderful individuals who comprised the Council.

The STANDING FIRM Staff
Megan, Mary, & Karen

The STANDING FIRM Advisory Council Through the Years

Anne Palmerine

Kevin Wilkes

Pat Raffaele

Mike Orehowsky

Richard Citrin

Kit Needham

Bill Ries

Maurita Bryant

Hon. Valerie Gaydos

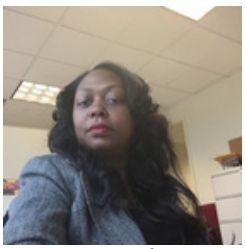
Patti Giudici

Janet Holshue

Lauren Rauscher

Brian Schrieber

Kelly Nelson


Monica Alston

In memory
Kirsten Crosby

STANDING FIRM Advisory Council: In Their Own Words

"One of the most rewarding and impactful experiences of my life. There is no greater sense of purpose than giving and helping others."

"Working women are also caregivers, either for children or aging parents. Employers, who recognize the signs that threaten the welfare and well-being of their employees, help create a safe and productive workplace environment. Domestic violence spills into the workplace because abusers know where to find working women."

"The work of STANDING FIRM has been crucial to bringing greater awareness to issues that often hide in the shadows. Every employer should be made aware of the impacts that workplace violence can have on their bottom line and should be engaging with STANDING FIRM to help them understand how they can prevent it."

"I've been involved with STANDING FIRM for nearly 20 years and have seen firsthand how powerfully they help organizations address partner violence as a workplace issue. Their approach—practical, evidence-based, and compassionate—gives leaders the tools to protect employees and build safer, more supportive cultures. STANDING FIRM doesn't just raise awareness—they equip organizations to lead with courage, creating workplaces where safety is a standard, not a hope."

"Partnering with STANDING FIRM empowers organizations to create safer, more supportive workplaces by addressing partner violence. Their expert training and resources help protect employees, reduce risk, and foster a culture of respect. By joining STANDING FIRM, your organization demonstrates true leadership and commitment to employee wellbeing, ensuring a stronger, more resilient workforce for the future."