

Plea from victim's family: Monitoring bracelets could save lives

By Sheila Ahern | Daily Herald Staff

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Michael Bischof wants electronic monitoring bracelets attached to the wrists of people who violate protection orders.

State Rep. Suzie Bassi, a Palatine Republican, is on board.

Bassi will work on legislation that will be introduced next January, she said at a news conference Thursday at the Rolling Meadows city hall. About 30 people attended the event, including police officers, politicians and friends and family of Cindy Bischof, who was murdered on March 7.

"We need greater safety guards and victims need more protection," Bassi said after the news conference.

The bracelets could be called "Cindy bracelets" in honor of his sister, said Michael Bischof. Cindy's father, Frank, took off his glasses to wipe away tears as Michael spoke at the news conference.

Cindy Bischof, 43, was fatally shot and killed outside her Elmhurst real estate office by a former boyfriend, Michael Giroux. Cindy Bischof had an order of protection against Giroux and Giroux violated that order at least three times, Michael Bischof said.

"Cindy did everything she was supposed to do," he said. "In 10 months, she lived in four different residences and even hotels. She lived in fear of this coward."

Electronic monitoring bracelets are mostly used to keep track of molesters but could be expanded to people who violate orders of protection, as Giroux had done, Michael Bischof said.

If Giroux were forced to wear an electronic monitoring bracelet, the attack might never have happened, he said. If the offender gets within a couple of miles of the victim's home or workplace, the victim can be notified using a global positioning system.

Michael Bischof said his sister was so fearful of her ex that she wouldn't take a shower unless her mace spray, cell phone and keys were within reach. One time, she came home to find him waiting for her in her dark garage, he said.

Michael Bischof is pushing not only for monitoring bracelets. Home confinement and mental health evaluations should also be required of people who violate protection orders, he said.

"Cindy dealt with the guy for 10 months," he said. "This murder was 10 months in the making."

The federal government is cutting funding to address domestic abuse by 25 percent starting on July 1, said

Rebecca Darr, the executive director of WINGS in Cook County. That funding could disappear completely next year, she said.

One of out every 12 women will be stalked in her lifetime, said Gretchen Vapnar, the executive director of the Elgin Community Crisis Center.

“Women and children are being abandoned in our state,” she said.

Rolling Meadows Police Chief Steven Williams said the idea of “Cindy bracelets” is worth looking into.

“The technology is there,” Williams said.

Police said Giroux had recently spent time as an inpatient at mental health facilities, but would not comment on the mental health issues involved.

The most recent hospitalization was last fall, Mike Bischof said, and Giroux was released around Thanksgiving.

Since moving out of Bischof's home, he lived in Chicago and Palatine, records show.

A wake for Bischof is being planned for Thursday night at Glueckert Funeral Home in Arlington Heights, with the funeral Friday at St. Anne Catholic Church in Barrington.

The Bischof family is planning to set up a scholarship fund in Cindy's name and advocate for domestic violence victims -- especially strengthening the orders of protection.

"There are going to be a lot of people like Cindy, after Cindy, unless things change," Mike Bischof said.