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Act No. 103 (H.27). An act relating to coercive controlling behavior and abuse prevention orders

Subjects: Domestic relations; abuse prevention

This act amends the definition of abuse to include coercive controlling behavior for purposes of Vermont's law regarding domestic relief from abuse orders. The change to the definition of abuse is only for purposes of civil protection orders and does not amend the definition of abuse relating to the crime of domestic assault. Coercive controlling behavior is defined as a pattern of behavior that in purpose or effect unreasonably interferes with a person's free will and personal liberty. Coercive controlling behavior includes unreasonably engaging in any of the following:

- (1) isolating the family or household member from friends, relatives, or other sources of support;
- (2) depriving the family or household member of basic necessities;
- (3) controlling, regulating, or monitoring the family or household member's movements, communications, daily behavior, finances, economic resources, or access to services;
- (4) compelling the family or household member by force, threat, or intimidation, including threats based on actual or suspected immigration status, to:
 - (A) engage in conduct from which such family or household member has a right to abstain; or
 - (B) abstain from conduct that such family or household member has a right to pursue;
- (5) committing or threatening to commit cruelty to animals that intimidates the family or household member; or
- (6) forced sex acts or threats of a sexual nature, including threatened acts of sexual conduct, threats based on a person's sexuality, or threats to release sexual images.

Effective Date: July 1, 2024