

From: Sarah Robinson
Sent: Thursday, January 4, 2024 3:04 PM
To: Martin LaLonde
Subject: [External] Feedback re: Protection Orders

Hello Rep. LaLonde,

At the request of the committee, I did reach out to some of my colleagues across the country in other states which have codified something similar to coercive control in their protection order statutes.

In the short period of time, I did not receive as many responses as hoped. However, this is what I did receive:

- Hawaii: Advocates report that they don't have data from the courts about how many additional protective orders have been issued because it is not being tracked. The Hawaii statute also includes psychological abuse and historically, advocates have found that the courts have not granted many protective orders for this reason. There have been no constitutional challenges to the statutes.
- Maine: Advocates report that the language related to coercive controlling behavior is incredibly useful and that victims can and do get protection orders for coercive controlling behaviors and that they have been able to for a very long time. They are unaware of any undue burden on the courts. Maine advocates report that abusive partners do sometimes file for these orders but that the law allows judges to resolve final orders accurately in most cases.
- Connecticut: Advocates reported that there is no way for the Judiciary to track which orders are requested solely for coercive control vs. a combination of coercive control and physical or threatened physical assault. In a recent statewide survey of advocates, a majority reported that the additional of coercive control to the restraining order had a positive impact on obtaining orders. A few reported it had a neutral impact. No one reported a negative impact.

I hope that this is helpful to your committee.

Best,

Sarah

Sarah Robinson, M.S.W.
Deputy Director
Vermont Network Against Domestic & Sexual Violence
Pronouns: She/her/her

Uprooting the causes of violence so all Vermonters thrive.