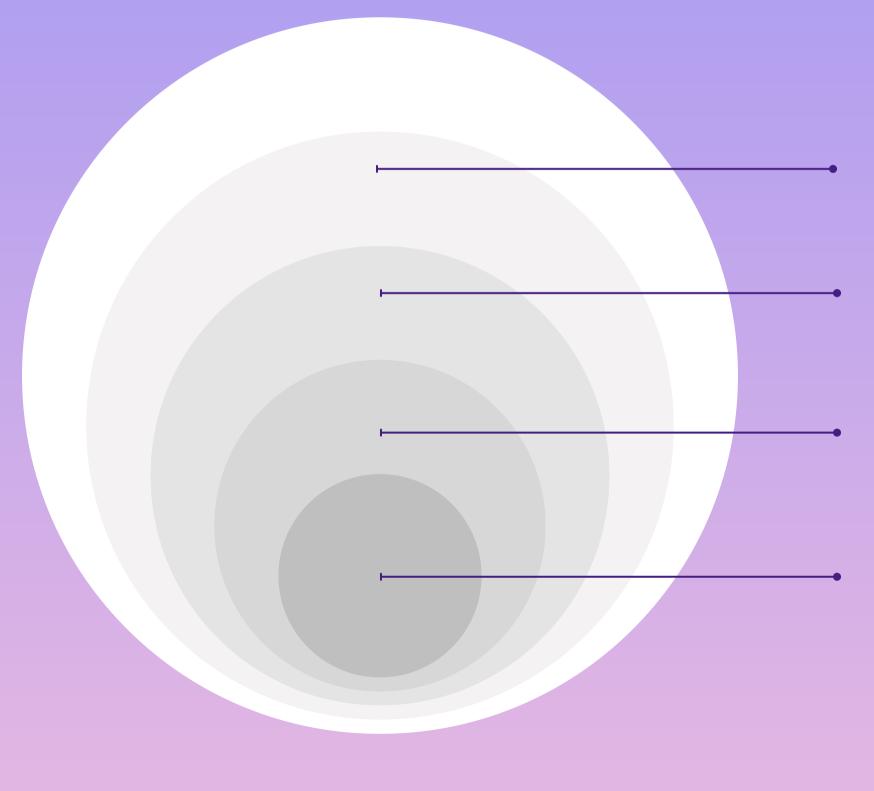
Testimony H.222

Office of Racial Equity May 9th 2025





Latina

Bisexual

Domestic violence survivor

Immigrant woman

Former Victim Specialist for the City of Burlington

Current Part-Time States Attorney Office Victim Advocate -Caledonia County

ORE/ DRJS Analyst -Full Time

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Key changes

H.222 gives courts a new tool against domestic violence by letting judges order people with relief-from-abuse orders to complete domestic violence accountability programs (DVAP)

Court can order DVAP attendance

No criminal penalty for skipping (currently)

Modern stalking definition

Genderneutral language

Arguments supporting the bill

Domestic violence isn't taken seriously enough. H.222 may increase engagement in these programs. The Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission has highlighted accountability programming as important.

Arguments against the bill

It is not pedagogical to obligate people to learn. To be effective, education should be voluntary. Making DVAP mandatory does not mean people will learn & unlearn macho culture/patriarchy.

Complex implementation issues exist - people with multiple court cases can face contradictory requirements (like staying away from someone while under home confinement)

Open

question/conversation. Why are people not going in the first place? Structural factors?

- Transportation issues
- Work schedule conflicts
- Lack of childcare
- Stigma or denial

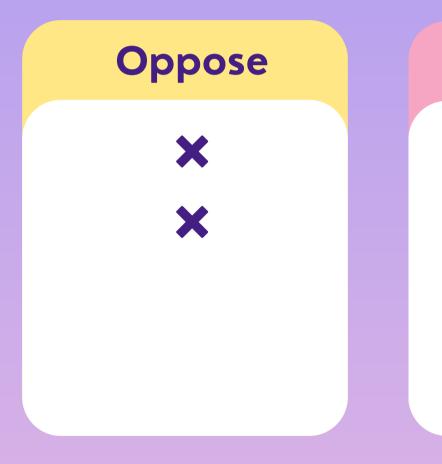
Office of Racial Equity's position

Court can order DVAP attendance

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Support

What are the structural roots of this problem? Systemic inequalities and power imbalances, particularly regarding gender

Systemic inequalities and power imbalances, particularly regarding gender

It reflects an unbalanced distribution of social, political, and economic power between women and men

Domestic violence is rooted in women's unequal status in society Harmful cultural norms include traditional beliefs: A man's right to power over a woman, the idea of male superiority, or domestic violence is a private matter



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Prevention should be a central focus to address structural causes

Integrating education to transform cultural patterns

Use a trauma-informed approach (Kheya Ganguly)

Encourage collaboration (agencies) to reduce fatalities

What can be done to stop this from happening?

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Addressing systemic inequality and exclusion crucial

Listening to organizers and advocates in VT!



Latin America: prevention, attention, sanction, and reparation

Ireland: prevention, protection, prosecution, and policy coordination



The relationship between firearms and domestic violence in VT is lethal

According to the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission (2025), Vermont recognizes firearm injury as a leading cause of domestic violence homicide. Firearms are heavily implicated in homicides in Vermont, both overall and in domestic violence-related homicides.