

VA HB 1311 Testimony 1-24-2024

I am in support of House Bill 1311. We need this bill along with more legislation to protect victims of domestic abuse against perpetrators having the legal system on their side to drag and abuse their victim further with Virginia courts.

I am currently entrapped in an abusive marriage. The protective order I have in place is not enough because the bullying, intimidation, and threats continue through his coercive controlling behaviors while violating court orders without consequences. He refuses to let me go amicably, has gotten in my face with his violent temper, refuses to contribute to the joint household living expenses, withholds his income and forces me to pay all the bills, has threatened to put me and my mother out of my home and have me continue to pay all the bills while he lives in the house, and has threatened to force me to pay for life insurance premiums naming him as the beneficiary for his benefit. I am in survival mode daily in an unsafe situation.

Passing HB 1311 is a start to address the legal trap holding me in an abusive marriages against my will longer than I need to be. There is a lack of protection by law to recognize the many forms of domestic violence such as emotional abuse, mental abuse, psychological abuse, and financial abuse as cruelty and willful constructive desertion and abandonment.

I need legal protection to get out safely NOW, not a year from now. I should not be forced to live in fear with this man another minute, not have full protection under the law from all forms of abuse, nor should I have to wait a whole year after establishing a separation date before I am granted freedom from the abuser.

On your watch, please do not allow domestic violence victims to remain entrapped for a whole year to prolong the emotional, mental, physical, psychological, and financial abuse giving time for things to potentially escalate to physical injuries and/or domestic homicides.

Thank you for your time.

Dear Virginia Legislators,

Our legal system needs more legislation to protect victims of Domestic Abuse/Violence against the perpetrators having legislation on their side to drag/abuse the victims in Virginia courts. We are past due needing legislation in place to recognize that domestic violence according to the National Domestic Violence Organization includes "behaviors that physically harm, intimidate, manipulate, or control a partner or otherwise force them to behave in ways they don't want to...through physical violence, threats, emotional abuse, or financial control." [Domestic Violence Support | National Domestic Violence Hotline \(thehotline.org\)](#)

I propose enactment of legislation that will provide domestic abuse victims protections against nonviolent coercive control that has the potential to escalate to physical injuries and/or domestic homicides and for victims to have the means to establish grounds for divorce based on nonviolent coercive control behaviors.

In my divorce case, the abuser was allowed to file a Demurrer challenging the legal validity of my Complaint/claim as a domestic abuse victim which allows him to drag/abuse me through the court system that works in his favor. It is like a legal trap enabling my abuser to hold me in a marriage against my will because courts do not recognize the many forms of domestic abuse like emotional abuse, mental abuse, psychological abuse, and financial abuse as grounds for divorce. My attorney informed me on several occasions that when we do go to court, because of the laws, a judge may not recognize the emotional, psychological, and financial abuse as cruelty and constructive desertion for divorce. ***I need protection now along with other victims.*** I should not be forced to live in fear with this man, not have full protection under the law or have to wait a year after establishing a separation date before I am granted freedom from the abuser.

I believe the following states have passed and/or have pending Coercive Control Laws to protect domestic abuse victims:

Enacted: California SB11411, Connecticut SB1091, Hawaii HB2425, Washington HB1901

Pending: Florida HB781/SB1106, New York S5306, Maryland HB1352, South Carolina HB5271

Article on Coercive Control Laws in the US:

[Coercive Control Laws in the US Should Cover These 10 Areas \(domesticshelters.org\)](#)

Best Regards,

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