

Increasing Interventions for Victims Experiencing Non-Physical Abuse in Relationships

Coercive Control is a pattern of acts and behaviors that an abuser uses to control a victim's life. It can be just as devastating as physical violence, even though its impact is often invisible.

Coercive Control is a foundation of intimate partner violence and can include threats, humiliation, and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or scare a victim.

S. 702 (Goldfinch) proposes to amend Section 16-25-10 to reform definitions of domestic violence to include coercive control, harassment, and stalking. This legislation aims to address gaps in protection for victims by legally recognizing coercive control as a form of domestic abuse.

Since 2020, more than half a dozen states have passed legislation to include coercive control as grounds for victims to access protective orders, while one, Hawaii has passed a law that criminalizes these behaviors as a misdemeanor.

The death by suicide of Mica Miller and the alleged abuse she experienced from her husband, J.P. Miller, has highlighted the importance of a broader understanding and response to all forms of domestic violence. J.P. Miller has been indicted on federal charges related to the alleged abuse of his wife, and an additional charge of lying to investigators.

EXAMPLES OF COERCIVE CONTROL:

- › Isolation
- › Harassment
- › Controlling a Victim's Body
- › Controlling a Victim's Finances
- › Monitoring a Victim's Activity
- › Gaslighting

About the Bill

S. 702 would address gaps in protection for victims experiencing non-physical, abusive, and controlling behaviors in relationships by:

- › Significantly reforming the definitions of domestic violence to include harassment, stalking, and other elements of coercive control in both criminal and family court increasing possible interventions and protections for victims experiencing the wide range of harmful behaviors that characterize abusive relationships beyond physical violence.
- › Expanding the current definition of household member to include current and former dating partners.