



Amend DE's Protection from Abuse Statute to Address Economic Abuse

Economic Abuse occurs in 99% of domestic violence cases. National studies and local surveys of DE Survivors document how concerns over the ability to provide financially for themselves and their children is one of the top reasons for staying in or returning to an abusive partner. As with all forms of abuse, **Economic Abuse** occurs across all socio-economic, educational, and racial and ethnic groups.

<https://centerforfinancialsecurity.files.wordpress.com/2015/04/adams2011.pdf>

Abusive tactics include:

- changing password/ PINs; diverting financial communications; canceling or tampering with another's card or account
- ruining credit, generating debt, or taking out credit without consent
- controlling or denying access to financial accounts
- withholding funds to obtain basic needs such as food and medicine
- interfering with education or employment opportunities

CURRENT GAPS IN SAFETY & PROTECTION

Economic Abuse is not clearly mentioned in DE's Protection from Abuse statute which has led to gaps in protection and safety. By specifically including it, Family Court can more effectively identify and respond to it. Addressing this through civil processes also helps mitigate negative outcomes associated with the criminal justice system.

The Federal Violence Against Women's Act, reauthorized this year was amended to include **Economic Abuse** specifically .

Other states leading the effort to recognize and address **Economic Abuse** include CA, ME, and NY.

- Up to 60% of victims of intimate partner violence lose jobs stemming from the abuse.
- Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence found that 64% of victims reported impact on ability to work; 40% reported their abuser harassed them at work via phone and in person.
- Victims of intimate partner violence lose a total of 8 million days of paid work each year, the equivalent of 32,000 jobs.
- One study found that up to 50% of victims/survivors of sexual assault either lost or left their jobs after being assaulted.

Source: <https://ncadv.org/blog/posts/quick-guide-economic-and-financial-abuse>

PROPOSED SOLUTION

Amend 10 Del C § 1041 of DE's Protection from Abuse Statute to specifically recognizing economic abuse and coercive conduct which restricts, controls, or interferes with an individual's finances or financial resources including their bank accounts, credit cards, employment, education, and personal identity within the definition of "abuse" .