

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 1547**

By Representatives Higgins of Leominster and Nguyen of Andover, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1547) of Natalie M. Higgins, Tram T. Nguyen and others relative to domestic violence protections. The Judiciary.

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court  
(2023-2024)

An Act to improve protections relative to domestic violence.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. (a) For the purposes of this section, the following words shall have the  
2 following meanings:

3 "Coercive control", for purposes of this chapter, coercive control is a pattern of conduct  
4 that has the purpose or effect of substantially restricting an individual's safety or autonomy  
5 through intimidation, isolation, implicit or explicit threats, or by compelling compliance.  
6 Conduct undertaken by an individual to protect themselves or their children from the risk of  
7 present or future harm does not constitute coercive control. Examples of coercive control  
8 include:

9 (i) Isolating the other parent from friends, relatives, faith, cultural, or linguistic  
10 communities, employment, education, or other support networks;

11 (ii) Repeatedly humiliating or using degrading language or behaviors towards the  
12 petitioner;

13 (iii) Controlling, regulating, or monitoring the individual's activities, communications,  
14 movements, finances, economic resources, or access to resources;

15 (iv) Threatening to harm, abduct or kill the individual or a child or relative of the  
16 individual;

17 (v) Threatening to publish information or make false reports to the police or the  
18 authorities;

19 (vi) Damaging property or household goods;

20 (vii) Forcing the individual to take part in criminal activity;

21 (viii) Committing or threatening to commit cruelty or abuse to animals connected to the  
22 family;

23 (ix) Using repeated court actions not warranted by existing law or good faith argument to  
24 harass, coerce, or control the other party, diminish or exhaust the other party's financial  
25 resources, or compromise the other party's employment or housing;

26 (x) Cleaning, accessing, displaying, using, or wearing a firearm in an intimidating or  
27 threatening manner; and

28 (xi) Threatening deportation or to contact local or federal agencies based on actual or  
29 perceived immigration status, refusing to file immigration applications, refusing to sponsor,  
30 withholding essential documents needed for immigration applications, or threatening to  
31 withdraw immigration applications filed on the other parent's or child's behalf or coercing or  
32 forcing the other parent to violate the terms of their immigration visa.

33           “Technological abuse”, an act or pattern of behavior intended to harm, threaten,  
34 intimidate, control, stalk, harass, impersonate, exploit, or extort, such as cyberstalking or other  
35 forms of electronic monitoring or surveillance, nonconsensual sharing of explicit images, or  
36 impersonation. Technological abuse can utilize any form of technology, including but not limited  
37 to Internet, social networking sites, computers, mobile devices, cellular telephones, apps,  
38 location tracking devices, instant messages, text messages, and other forms of technology.

39           (b) Section 1 of Chapter 209A of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting the  
40 following after subsection (c) in the definition of “abuse”:-

41           (d) coercive control

42           (e) technological abuse.

43           SECTION 2. The fourth sentence of Section 63 of ch. 277 of the General Laws, as  
44 appearing in the 2018 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after the word “sections”  
45 the following words:- 13A, 13M