

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Eugenia Malpica. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of House Bill 1586.

I am here as a mother and as someone who has personally experienced coercive control during a relationship and divorce. I also speak as someone whose life became directly connected to the tragic killing of Judge Andrew Wilkinson. Experiences like mine have shown me how patterns of intimidation, control, and threats can escalate when they are not recognized early.

In my case, the harm did not begin with physical violence. It appeared through patterns of control that slowly affected nearly every aspect of daily life.

For example, financial decisions were controlled in ways that made it difficult for me to maintain independence. Access to a vehicle was restricted, which limited my ability to move freely or make basic decisions for myself and my children. At times, homeschooling was used in a way that isolated the children and me from outside support and community connections.

There were also repeated threats that if I attempted to leave the relationship, my children could be taken away from me. Those kinds of threats create an environment of fear and pressure that can make it extremely difficult for someone to safely change their situation.

These types of behaviors may not always involve physical violence, but they are powerful forms of control that can deeply affect a person's safety, stability, and autonomy.

House Bill 1586 recognizes that abuse is often a pattern of behavior designed to control or intimidate another person over time. By allowing courts to consider coercive and controlling behavior when evaluating protective orders, this legislation gives the legal system an earlier opportunity to intervene before situations escalate further.

Recognizing coercive control in law would help courts better understand the realities many families experience and provide a pathway for protection before harm becomes even greater.

When the law recognizes coercive control early, it can help prevent the kind of escalation that destroys families, devastates communities, and in tragic cases can cost lives.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to support House Bill 1586.

Thank you for your time and consideration.