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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2019

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A N A C T

RELATING TO DOMESTIC RELATIONS - DOMESTIC ABUSE PREVENTION

Introduced By: Representatives Blazejewski, Kazarian, Casimiro, Alzate, and  
Marszalkowski

Date Introduced: February 14, 2019

Referred To: House Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Sections 15-15-1, 15-15-5 and 15-15-6 of the General Laws in Chapter 15-  
2 15 entitled "Domestic Abuse Prevention" are hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **15-15-1. Definitions.**

4 The following words as used in this chapter have the following meanings:

5 (1) "Course of conduct" means a pattern of conduct composed of a series of acts over a  
6 period of time, evidencing a continuity of purpose. Constitutionally protected activity is not  
7 included within the meaning of "course of conduct".

8 (2) "Courts" means the family court.

9 (3) "Cyberstalking" means transmitting any communication by computer to any person or  
10 causing any person to be contacted for the sole purpose of harassing that person or his or her  
11 family.

12 (4) "Domestic abuse" means:

13 the occurrence of one or more of the following acts between present or former family  
14 members, parents, stepparents, [a minor child in the care or custody of the plaintiff](#), or persons  
15 who are or have been in a substantive dating or engagement relationship within the past one year  
16 in which at least one of the persons is a minor:

17 (i) Attempting to cause or causing physical harm;

18 (ii) Placing another in fear of imminent serious physical harm;

19 (iii) Causing another to engage involuntarily in sexual relations by force, threat of force,

1 or duress; or

2 (iv) Stalking or cyberstalking.

3 (5) "Harassing" means following a knowing and willful course of conduct directed at a  
4 specific person with the intent to seriously alarm, annoy, or bother the person, and which serves  
5 no legitimate purpose. The course of conduct must be such as would cause a reasonable person to  
6 suffer substantial emotional distress, or be in fear of bodily injury.

7 (6) "Parents" mean persons who together are the legal parents of one or more children,  
8 regardless of their marital status or whether they have lived together at any time.

9 (7) "Present or former family member" means the spouse, former spouse, minor children,  
10 stepchildren, [the plaintiff's minor child or child in plaintiff's care or custody, minor children of](#)  
11 [substantive dating partners](#), or persons who are related by blood or marriage.

12 (8) "Sexual exploitation" means the occurrence of any of the following acts by any  
13 person who knowingly or willfully encourages, aids, or coerces any child under the age of  
14 eighteen (18) years:

15 (i) Recruiting, employing, enticing, soliciting, isolating, harboring, transporting,  
16 providing, persuading, obtaining, or maintaining, or so attempts, any minor for the purposes of  
17 commercial sex acts or sexually explicit performances; or selling or purchasing a minor for the  
18 purposes of commercial sex acts.

19 (A) "Commercial sex act" means any sex act or sexually explicit performance on account  
20 of which anything of value is given, promised to, or received, directly or indirectly, by any  
21 person.

22 (B) "Sexually-explicit performance" means an act or show, intended to arouse, satisfy the  
23 sexual desires of, or appeal to the prurient interests of patrons or viewers, whether public or  
24 private, live, photographed, recorded, or videotaped.

25 (9) "Stalking" means harassing another person or willfully, maliciously and repeatedly  
26 following another person with the intent to place that person in reasonable fear of bodily injury.

27 (10) "Substantive dating" or "engagement relationship" means a significant and  
28 personal/intimate relationship which shall be adjudged by the court's consideration by the  
29 following factors:

30 (i) The length of time of the relationship;

31 (ii) The type of relationship; and

32 (iii) The frequency of interaction between the parties.

33 **15-15-5. Duties of police officers.**

34 (a) Whenever any police officer has reason to believe that a family member or parent has

1 been abused, that officer shall use all reasonable means to prevent further abuse, including:

2 (1) Remaining on the scene as long as there is a danger to the physical safety of the  
3 person or until the person is able to leave the dwelling unit;

4 (2) Assisting the person in obtaining medical treatment necessitated by an assault,  
5 including obtaining transportation to an emergency medical treatment facility;

6 (3) Giving the person immediate and adequate notice of his or her rights under this  
7 chapter;

8 (4) Arresting the abusive person pursuant to the arrest provisions in § 12-29-3; and

9 (5) Reporting any physical injury to a minor child or a threat to physically injure a minor  
10 child within twenty-four (24) hours of his or her investigation to CANTS (Child abuse and  
11 neglect tracking system).

12 (b) Notice by the police officer to the victim shall be by handing the victim a copy of the  
13 following statement written in English, Portuguese, Spanish, Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian,  
14 Vietnamese, and French, and by reading the statement to the person when possible:

15 SPOUSE, FORMER SPOUSE, BLOOD RELATIVE, CHILDREN IN COMMON,  
16 MINORS IN SUBSTANTIVE DATING OR ENGAGEMENT RELATIONSHIP, MINOR  
17 CHILDREN IN YOUR CARE OR CUSTODY.

18 "If your attacker is your spouse, former spouse, or person to whom you are related by  
19 blood or marriage, or if you are not married to your attacker but have a child in common, or if  
20 you and/or your attacker is a minor who have been in a substantive dating or engagement  
21 relationship within the past six (6) months, you have the right to go to the family court and  
22 request:

23 "(1) An order restraining your attacker from abusing you, ~~or~~ your minor child or minor  
24 child in your care or custody;

25 "(2) An order awarding you exclusive use of your marital domicile;

26 "(3) An order awarding you custody of your minor child."

27 UNMARRIED/NOT RELATED COHABITANTS WITHIN THE PAST THREE  
28 YEARS, OR HAVE BEEN IN A SUBSTANTIVE DATING OR ENGAGEMENT  
29 RELATIONSHIP WITHIN THE PAST SIX (6) MONTHS

30 "If you are not married or related to your attacker, but have resided with him or her  
31 within the past three (3) years, or you are in or have been in a substantive dating or engagement  
32 relationship with your attacker within the past six (6) months, you have the right to go to the  
33 district court and request:

34 "(1) An order restraining your attacker from abusing you;

1           "(2) An order directing your attacker to leave your household, unless he or she has the  
2 sole legal interest in the household."

3           **ADDITIONAL RIGHTS.**

4           "If you are in need of medical treatment, you have the right to have the officer present  
5 obtain transportation to an emergency medical treatment facility.

6           "If you believe that police protection is needed for your physical safety, you have the  
7 right to have the officer present remain at the scene until you and your children can leave or until  
8 your safety is otherwise ensured.

9           "You have the right to file a criminal complaint with the responding officer or your local  
10 police department if the officer has not arrested the perpetrator."

11           (c) A police officer shall ensure enforcement of the terms of a protective order issued  
12 pursuant to this chapter including, but not limited to, accompanying a family member or parent to  
13 his or her dwelling or residence in order to secure possession of the dwelling or residence.

14           (d) When service of the temporary order issued pursuant to § 15-15-4 has not been made  
15 and/or after a permanent order is entered, a police officer shall give notice of the order to the  
16 defendant by handing him or her a certified copy of the order. The officer shall indicate that he or  
17 she has given notice by writing on plaintiff 's copy of the order and the police department's copy  
18 of the order, the date and time of giving notice and the officer's name and badge number. The  
19 officer shall indicate on the offense report that actual notice was given.

20           **15-15-6. Form of complaint.**

21           (a) A form in substantially the following language shall suffice for the purpose of filing a  
22 complaint under this chapter:

23   STATE OF RHODE ISLAND		FAMILY COURT
24   COUNTY OF _____		
25   _____ :		
	26                           Plaintiff	:
		27                           :
	28                           VS.	:                           F.C. NO. _____
		29                           :
30   _____ :		
	31                           Defendant:	

32           **COMPLAINT FOR PROTECTION FROM ABUSE**

33           Pursuant to Chapter 15 of this title, I request that the court enter an order protecting me  
34 from abuse.

1 (1) My full name, present street address, city, and telephone number are as  
2 follows: \_\_\_\_\_  
3 \_\_\_\_\_

4 (2) My former residence, which I have left to avoid abuse, is as follows (street address  
5 and city): \_\_\_\_\_  
6 \_\_\_\_\_

7 (3) The full name, present street address, city, and telephone number of the person  
8 causing me abuse (the defendant) are as follows:  
9 \_\_\_\_\_

10 (4) My relationship to the defendant is as follows:

11 \_\_\_\_\_ We (are) (were formerly) married to one another.

12 \_\_\_\_\_ I am the defendant's (child) (parent).

13 \_\_\_\_\_ I am the blood relative or relative by marriage of the defendant;

14 specifically, the defendant is my \_\_\_\_\_

15 \_\_\_\_\_ I and the defendant are together the legal parents of one or more children [in](#)  
16 [common](#).

17 \_\_\_\_\_ [I and the defendant have had a substantive dating or engagement relationship.](#)

18 \_\_\_\_\_ [I am a parent of a minor child\(ren\) in my care or custody, to which defendant is](#)  
19 [not a blood relative or relative by marriage.](#)

20 (5) On or about \_\_\_\_\_, I suffered abuse when the  
21 defendant:

22 \_\_\_\_\_ Threatened or harmed me with a weapon; (type of weapon used: \_\_\_\_\_)

23 \_\_\_\_\_ Attempted to cause me physical harm;

24 \_\_\_\_\_ Caused me physical harm;

25 \_\_\_\_\_ Placed me in fear of imminent physical harm;

26 \_\_\_\_\_ Caused me to engage involuntarily in sexual relations by force, threat of

27 force, or duress. Specifically, the defendant

28 \_\_\_\_\_

29 \_\_\_\_\_

30 \_\_\_\_\_

31 \_\_\_\_\_

32 (6) I ask that:

33 \_\_\_\_\_ The court order that the defendant be restrained and enjoined from contacting,  
34 assaulting, molesting, or otherwise interfering with the plaintiff at home, on the street or

1 elsewhere.

2 \_\_\_\_\_ The court order the defendant to immediately leave the household which is  
3 located at

4 \_\_\_\_\_

5 \_\_\_\_\_ The court award me temporary custody of the following minor child(ren)(the  
6 defendant and I are husband and wife):

7 Names Date of Birth

8 That \_\_\_\_\_

9 \_\_\_\_\_

10 \_\_\_\_\_

11 I request that the above relief be ordered without notice because it clearly appears from  
12 specific facts shown by affidavit or by the verified complaint that I will suffer immediate and  
13 irreparable injury, loss, or damage before notice can be served and a hearing had thereon. I  
14 understand that the court will schedule a hearing no later than twenty-one (21) days after the  
15 order is entered on the question of continuing the temporary order.

16 (7) I have not sought protection from abuse from any other judge of the family court  
17 arising out of the facts or circumstances alleged in this complaint.

18 (8) That the court award me support for my minor children as required by law for a  
19 period not to exceed ninety (90) days.

20 \_\_\_\_\_

21 (Signature) (Date)

22 Subscribed and sworn to before me in \_\_\_\_\_ in the county of  
23 \_\_\_\_\_ in the state of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations,  
24 this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ A.D. 20\_\_\_\_\_.

25 \_\_\_\_\_

26 Notary Public

27 Note: If this complaint is filed by an attorney, the attorney's certificate should appear as  
28 below:

29 ATTORNEY CERTIFICATE

30 Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

31 Attorney for Plaintiff

32 Address: \_\_\_\_\_

33 \_\_\_\_\_

34 Date: \_\_\_\_\_, 20 \_\_\_\_\_

1 WHITE COPY -- Court  
 2 YELLOW COPY -- Plaintiff  
 3 PINK COPY -- Defendant  
 4 GOLDENROD COPY -- Police Department

5 (b) A form in substantially the following language shall suffice for the purpose of  
 6 requesting temporary orders under this chapter:

7 STATE OF RHODE ISLAND FAMILY COURT  
 8 COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_  
 9 \_\_\_\_\_ :  
 10 Plaintiff :  
 11 :  
 12 VS. : F.C. NO. \_\_\_\_\_  
 13 :  
 14 \_\_\_\_\_ :  
 15 Defendant:

16 TEMPORARY ORDER PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 15 OF  
 17 THIS TITLE GENERAL LAWS OF RHODE ISLAND

18 Upon consideration of plaintiff's complaint and having found that immediate and  
 19 irreparable injury, loss, or damage will result to the plaintiff before a notice can be served and a  
 20 hearing had thereon it is ORDERED:

21 \_\_\_\_\_ That the defendant is restrained and enjoined from contacting, assaulting,  
 22 molesting, or otherwise interfering with plaintiff and any minor children of the plaintiff at home,  
 23 on the street, or elsewhere, to wit, \_\_\_\_\_  
 24 \_\_\_\_\_

25 \_\_\_\_\_ That the defendant vacate forthwith the household located at  
 26 \_\_\_\_\_  
 27 \_\_\_\_\_

28 \_\_\_\_\_ That the plaintiff, being the [husband] [wife] of the defendant, be and  
 29 [s]he hereby is awarded temporary custody of the minor child[ren], to wit, \_\_\_\_\_  
 30 \_\_\_\_\_

31 \_\_\_\_\_ That the defendant pay to the plaintiff the support of the minor child(ren) the sum  
 32 of \$\_\_\_\_\_ per \_\_\_\_\_.

33 \_\_\_\_\_ That \_\_\_\_\_  
 34 \_\_\_\_\_

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A hearing on the continuation of this ORDER will be held at the family court,  
\_\_\_\_\_ County, at \_\_\_\_\_ [A.M.] [P.M.] on \_\_\_\_\_.

If the defendant wishes to be heard, [s]he will be heard at that time. If [s]he does not appear at that time, this ORDER shall remain in effect.

This ORDER is effective forthwith, and will remain in effect until the time and date of the above-mentioned hearing.

A copy of this ORDER shall be transmitted to the appropriate local law enforcement agency forthwith, and shall be served in-hand on the defendant herein.

ENTERED as an order of court this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, A.D. 20\_\_.

SECTION 2. Section 8-8.1-5 of the General Laws in Chapter 8-8.1 entitled "Domestic Assault" is hereby amended to read as follows:

**8-8.1-5. Duties of police officers.**

(a) Whenever any police officer has reason to believe that a cohabitant or minor has been abused, that officer shall use all reasonable means to prevent further abuse, including:

- (1) Remaining on the scene as long as there is danger to the physical safety of the person or until the person is able to leave the dwelling unit;
- (2) Assisting the person in obtaining medical treatment necessitated by an assault, including obtaining transportation to an emergency medical treatment facility;
- (3) Giving the person immediate and adequate notice of his or her rights under this chapter;
- (4) Arresting the person pursuant to the arrest provisions as contained in § 12-29-3.

(b) Notice by the police officer to the victim shall be by handing the victim a copy of the following statement written in English, Portuguese, Spanish, Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian, Vietnamese, and French, and by reading the statement to the person when possible:

Spouse, former spouse/blood relative/children in common; minor(s) in a substantive dating or engagement relationship; [minor children in your care or custody](#):

"If your attacker is your spouse, former spouse, person to whom you are related by blood or marriage, or if you are not married to your attacker, but have a child in common, or if you and/or your attacker are a minor who have been in a substantive dating or engagement relationship within the past six (6) months, you have the right to go to the family court and ask the court to issue an order restraining your attacker from abusing you, ~~or~~ your minor child [or minor child in your care or custody](#); you have the right to go to the family court and request:

- (1) an order restraining your attacker from abusing you, ~~or~~ your minor child [or minor](#)



1 [child in your care or custody](#);

2 (2) an order awarding you exclusive use of your marital domicile;

3 (3) an order awarding you custody of your minor child."

4 Unmarried/not related cohabitants within the past three (3) years or substantive dating or  
5 engagement relationship within past six (6) months:

6 "If you are not married or related to your attacker, but have resided with him or her  
7 within the past three (3) years, you have the right to go to the district court and request;

8 (1) an order restraining your attacker from abusing you;

9 (2) an order directing your attacker to leave your household, unless she or he has the sole  
10 legal interest in the household."

11 "If you are in need of medical treatment, you have the right to have the officer present  
12 obtain transportation to an emergency medical treatment facility."

13 "If you believe that police protection is needed for your physical safety, you have the  
14 right to have the officer present remain at the scene until you and your children can leave or until  
15 your safety is otherwise insured."

16 "You have the right to file a criminal complaint with the responding officer or your local  
17 police department if the officer has not arrested the perpetrator."

18 (c) A police officer shall ensure enforcement of the terms of the protective order issued  
19 pursuant to this chapter including but not limited to accompanying a cohabitant to his or her  
20 dwelling or residence in order to secure possession of the dwelling or residence when a vacate  
21 order against the defendant has been issued.

22 (d) When service of the temporary order issued pursuant to § 8-8.1-4 has not been made  
23 and/or after a permanent order is entered, a police officer shall give notice of the order to the  
24 defendant by handing him or her a certified copy of the order. The officer shall indicate that he or  
25 she has given notice by writing on plaintiff's copy of the order and the police department's copy  
26 of the order the date, and time of giving notice and the officer's name and badge number. The  
27 officer shall indicate on the offense report that actual notice was given.

28 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO DOMESTIC RELATIONS - DOMESTIC ABUSE PREVENTION

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1           This act would allow plaintiffs seeking a domestic abuse protective order in family court  
2 to include any of their minor children who are not related to the defendant by blood or marriage  
3 within the same complaint and restraining order, rather than seeking a protective order in district  
4 or superior court of children not biologically-related or marriage-related to the defendant.

5           This act would take effect upon passage.

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