

## **Nicole LeProhon Testimony for Bill 692**

**Monday, April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

Good morning, Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety. My name is Nicole.

In July of 2022, I escaped from my abusive husband. I went into hiding at a safe location and spent days fearing he would come after me and our children. He was arrested and bailed out. I was informed of when he departed the jail. I have never been so scared in my life as I was those first few days after escaping. My closest family members and friends that had helped me also did not sleep that first night. Since he was only arrested once for his physical attack on me in June 2022, it was called a first-time offense. In my reality, this attack was one of hundreds of attacks on my safety during my four-year marriage.

My husband had been terrorizing me in my home for four years. His tactics included: daily insults and degrading comments, isolating me from my family and my friends, intimidating me by pinning me up to a wall or looking at me like he wanted to kill me, threatening to kill me, gaslighting me and telling me I had a terrible memory to make me believe I was going crazy, physically assaulting me, sexually assaulting me, silencing my needs, wants, and opinions, using coercion to get what he wanted, and telling me he would take our children in a custody battle. These are just some examples of how I was controlled in my home. Most of these things were done in front of our two young daughters.

My ex-husband received a consequence of a deferred disposition and is required to take the certified Batterer's Intervention Program. The program that he is required to take is conducted on an online platform for an hour and a half a week for 48 weeks with an allowance of four

absences. I have no doubt that he will reoffend because taking a class is barely a consequence for physically assaulting a loved one. My children will not be safe in his care. I will not be safe if he knows where I am. Like so many other mothers and safe parents, my options are to let him have some control and power over my children and I or to be in constant fear that he will harm my children or me. If he had been convicted and served time in jail, this would have given me an opportunity to feel safe. Safety is a basic human right and we need to do better to protect people who have suffered abuse at the hands of people who were supposed to love them.