

Testimony of Brylie Murray in Support of LD 875

My name is Brylie Murray today is March 13th 2025 and I'm a 31 year old mother of two and I have been a victim of domestic violence more than once in my life. I grew up in a household that also had domestic violence and became witness to it. For me this started in 2008 when I was only 14 years old with a man who was 24 years old and not knowing any better. Having my son in 2012 after that relationship I was in a relationship with my son's father who was abusive and ultimately ending it. I then was with a man the first one from 2008, I cycled back to him, we had our daughter in 2015. 2019 He would stalk me or have his family follow me around and watch me while I'm at work, someone who would text me and call me repeatedly while I'm at work with the accusations I'm out cheating, someone who would be drinking while I'm at work so when I would get home he'd be less than happy, we'd spend hours arguing, so much I would pick up extra hours at work just not to be home, and sleeping separately, when I realized this wasn't what I wanted for me or for my kids to be around like I had been and making it known to him, the abuse went from mental to physical, and went from targeting me to targeting one of my children. That was the last day he was in my home. In March 2020 I found myself in a new relationship, seemed perfect and exactly what I was looking for in a person. May 2020 was the first time he hit me. I stayed because he didn't mean it, and how could I have ended up in a relationship just like my last two. Ultimately standing beside him, that wasn't the last time he put his hands on me, there was so many times that I can't keep track, there was times I reached out for help in August 2020 and was denied it do to us living together I was told he could break and destroy anything in the home as he lived there too, his apartment or not, so again I stayed. We had one good year, no abuse, no yelling, no fighting and no hitting and I felt like I had finally beat it. Until it happened again in September 2021. I stayed, again. In March 2022 he escalated and instead of the normal hitting me, throwing things at me, and the verbal abuse, he cut my throat with scissors and threatened one of my children, that was the last day he was in my home, and I knew I couldn't stay with him, or he was going to kill me. He left and I packed everything he owned. I'm sure by now you're wondering why I never called the cops or reported him, the one time I did I was dismissed, and I was so afraid that even though my children didn't have knowledge of the abuse that I would lose them, also so many times during the abuse when I would try to call for help he'd hurt my animals and threaten to kill them before the cops would get to me, fear was my biggest fear. Fear held me back. I felt if I could get him to leave, I would be okay. Wrong. End of April 2022 going into May 2022, 2 months of him not in my home was 2 months of constant stalking, threats, calls and texts all hours of the day and night, he even at one point sent multiple men to my home with guns to scare me and take our vehicle we shared that I had possession of. May 6th, 2022 was the day my life changed. May 6th, 2022, I called the police department in the

town I live in, I went down and filed a report, for everything all of what I could remember, some things I had pictures and documents of. May 6th, 2022, child protective services was called on me, not only to report me for being a victim of domestic assault with children in the home but due to who I had recently started seeing, this person had a past DV charge, and I had a history of being the perfect DV victim. May 9th, 2022, my children were taken from me. Fear, my biggest fear, my fear was reality. From May 2022 through August 2023 is where the change occurred. The department labeled me as unsafe with findings of neglect with failure to provide safety. The department did not open on my ex who also had two children of his own who were in the home with us as well with them stating "just because he abused you doesn't mean he will abuse his children" this is the same man with a history of previous domestic violence charges.

I came in contact with the Family Violence Project during this time, I was required to complete a full psychiatric evaluation and complete everything recommended, I was required parenting classes, I was required domestic violence classes/groups, and I was required weekly counseling sessions. That's where they came into play, I met advocate Tabitha who advocated for me and supported me, she listened with open ears and no judgment, she got me into the classes I needed and helped me learn. These weekly classes might have been an inconvenience or a cringe to some, but they were really the opposite for me, I really took in what was being put out there, it made me see where all of this stemmed from, why and how (my exposure as a child) and it helped me protect myself in the future in return to help me protect my children from the exposure to brighten their futures, it gave me the tools and resources to find positivity and self-love and self-respect and how important it truly is in living a healthy life and especially a healthy relationship. Tabitha also helped me outside of my case with the department but also in the criminal case my ex was being charged with, she would show up and advocate or just listen - whatever I needed during these meetings. In June 2023, after completing and passing every obstacle course put in my way, my children were returned home to me. Also in 2023, the man who was charged with multiple aggravated domestic violence, aggravated domestic violence terrorism and aggravated domestic violence threatening plus more with prior domestic violence charges was given not one day in jail, but with two years of probation. I was a victim of domestic violence, and I lost everything while my abuser walked free with no real punishment or consequences. Our system is broken, our system failed me because I waited too long to ask for help out of fear. Don't let fear determine your future. The cycle of domestic violence runs deep and it's dangerous and only you can stop it. All I can ever say or recommend is get help, ask for help in some way, there is help available to all and someone will hear you. Help yourself, love yourself more and give yourself a future, don't let anybody take yours away from you.