



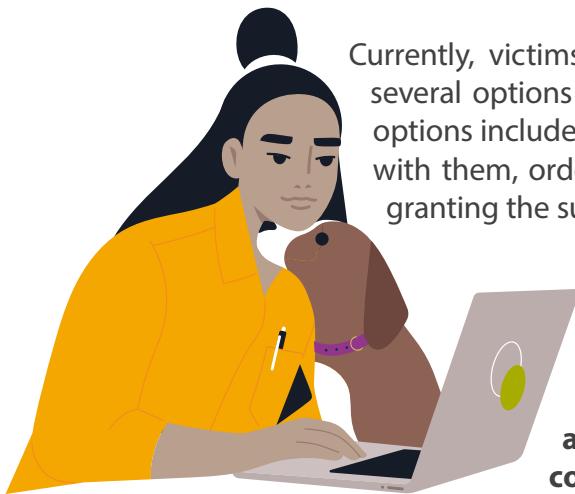
LB 11: Providing Clarification for Household Pets in Domestic Abuse Protection Orders

In Nebraska, an estimated 1.4 million people experience some form of gender-based violence in their lifetime.¹ While domestic violence is often perceived as physical violence toward a victim or survivor,² it can also include various forms of power and control. One way that perpetrators exercise power and control is by threatening to harm or kill

a household pet, making it increasingly difficult for someone to leave an abusive situation. **It is critical that Nebraska clarify protections for household pets in instances of domestic violence to provide assurance of safety for the pet and reduce a barrier for survivors seeking to leave an abusive situation.**

What Will LB 11 Do?

LB 11 will clarify domestic abuse protection orders to EXPLICITLY INCLUDE PROTECTION FOR HOUSEHOLD PETS.



Currently, victims applying for a domestic abuse protection order can check several options in the application for the court to include in the order. Some options include prohibiting the respondent from contacting or communicating with them, ordering the respondent to stay away from specific locations and granting the survivor temporary custody of minors.

Although current domestic abuse protection orders allow for victims to write-in a specific relief at the end of the application not provided on the general list, **LB 11 would explicitly add the option for the victim to have full custody and control of any household pets and would prohibit the respondent from coming into contact with or harming any household pets.**

This update will reduce a common barrier to leaving abusive situations and provide survivors seeking protection orders better clarification regarding the protection of pets.

Why LB 11 Matters

As many as 25% OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS have reported RETURNING TO AN ABUSIVE PARTNER out of CONCERN FOR THEIR PET.³

Continue reading for an explanation of the importance of LB 11 and why it matters.

LB 11 aligns with the Women's Fund values of **Collaboration** and **Community Voice**.
To learn more about our mission, vision and values, visit www.OmahaWomensFund.org.

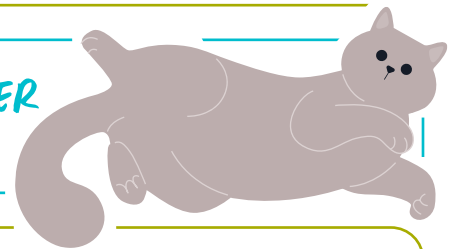


71% OF PET-OWNING WOMEN entering domestic violence shelters **REPORTED THAT THEIR ABUSER THREATENED, HARMED or KILLED A FAMILY PET.**⁴

In another study, **89% OF WOMEN** who had companion animals during an abusive relationship **REPORTED THEIR ANIMALS WERE THREATENED, HARMED or KILLED BY THEIR ABUSER.**⁵

More than **90% OF SURVIVORS** INDICATED THAT THEIR PETS PLAYED A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THEIR PERSONAL EXPERIENCE of survivorship and healing, providing emotional support or physical protection.⁶

29% OF SURVIVORS INDICATED THAT THEIR ABUSER had **HARMED or KILLED THE PET(S)** in the past.⁷



Nearly one-third (**30%**) OF SURVIVORS reported their **CHILDREN** had either **WITNESSED ABUSE OF HOUSEHOLD PETS** or were aware that it had taken place.⁸

NEBRASKA
is one of only a few states
to **NOT** provide
explicit protection for
household pets
in domestic abuse
protection orders.

To date, **37 other states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico** have enacted legislative provisions including pets in protection orders (*Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming*).⁹

¹ Nebraska Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence. 2022. "Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence in Nebraska: Findings From the 2020 Statewide Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey." https://www.nebraskacoalition.org/file_download/inline/a41dd397-7c05-438b-af6c-efd9d72bef1a

² The terms victim and survivor are used interchangeably throughout this resource to refer to those with lived experience of domestic violence. We realize that some individuals with lived experience identify as victims, some as survivors, some as both and some as neither. It is important to give those with lived experience power in defining their experiences given how they often had little control over their lives during their experience of violence. Always ask individuals with lived experience how they would like to be referred to so as to not make potentially harmful assumptions.

³ Bershader, M. 2015. "Protecting All the Victims of Domestic Violence." <https://www.aspc.org/blog/protecting-all-victims-domestic-violence>

⁴ National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. N.d. "Pets and Domestic Violence." <https://www.sheriffs.org/publications/NCADV-Pets-DV.pdf>

⁵ Betty Jo Barrett et al. 2020. Animal Maltreatment as a Risk Marker of More Frequent and Severe Forms of Intimate Partner Violence, 26 J. Interpersonal Violence 5131.

⁶ People and Animals Living Safely & Urban Resource Institute. "PALS Report and Survey Domestic Violence and Pets: Breaking Barriers to Safety and Healing." <https://urinc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/URI-PALS-Report.pdf>

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Wisch, R. 2022. Domestic Violence and Pets: List of States that Include Pets in Protection Orders. Michigan State University College of Law. <https://www.animallaw.info/article/domestic-violence-and-pets-list-states-include-pets-protection-orders>