

H.2018 / S.1173 - An Act Relative To Employment Protections For Victims Of Abusive Behavior

Lead House Sponsors: Rep. Jay Livingstone & Rep. Nika Elugardo
Lead Senate Sponsor: Sen. Cynthia Creem

Addresses gaps in current law that leave victims of abusive behavior vulnerable at work

“Abusive behavior” includes domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, criminal harassment, stalking, and kidnapping for purposes of sex or trafficking

- ▶ Adds to existing employment nondiscrimination laws a **prohibition against discrimination based on status** as a victim of abusive behavior.
- ▶ Requires employers to **provide reasonable accommodations** to ensure employees’ safety and ability to address the abusive behavior
- ▶ **Amends existing Abusive Behavior Leave Law** to be consistent with new definitions and to ensure that protections apply to prospective employees

New York, Illinois, California, Washington, Oregon, Hawaii have similar laws

Why Protections Are Needed:

- **Abusive behavior does not discriminate** – it affects every demographic and every community.
- **Almost all victims experience problems at work** related to their abusive situation.
- **21-60% of victims lose their jobs** due to reasons stemming from the abuse.
- **6 out of 10 homeless families have a history** of intimate partner violence.

Who Needs the Protections:

- A person escaping an abusive situation is **denied a job** for which she is qualified after she discloses situation to prospective employer
- An employee who has a stalker **needs his employer to change or unlist his work phone number**
- A rape survivor **needs an extended or additional break during work hours** to speak with a prosecutor, an attorney, an advocate, or a health care provider
- A parent of a child who was raped or kidnapped **needs to adjust his work schedule** to take the child to school because the child does not feel safe on the school bus
- A domestic violence survivor **needs locks to office or facility changed** because abuser stole her keys
- A victim of abusive behavior **needs a parking space close to work entrance** or in a well-lit area

Coalition (In Formation)

Alliance for Business Leadership
Elizabeth Freeman Center

Massachusetts Employment Lawyers Association
Women’s Bar Association of Massachusetts

Jane Doe, Inc.

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#ProtectedAtWork