



Colorado Office of the
Child's Representative



Please Vote YES on HB21-1099

Sponsors: Rep. Michaelson-Jenet & Ransom, Sen. Zenzinger & Smallwood

Problem:

Domestic abuse can have an emotional and psychological impact on children. The term, however, is not defined in title 19 of the children's code. Without a definition, child welfare caseworkers lack guidance on how to identify and assess for it.

Solution:

Define domestic abuse in title 19 to capture the impact of this adult behavior on a child.

Background:

'Domestic abuse' is defined in the civil code (CRS 13-14-101) and speaks to the violence, stalking, harassment or coercion that may exist between adults. Over the years, the child welfare fatality review team (CFRT) have observed an increasing number of egregious, near fatal and fatal cases in which domestic abuse is present and the corresponding emotional and psychological impact this adult behavior has on children. Out of the 232 Incidents reviewed by CFRT in CYs 2014-2019, domestic abuse was a stressor identified 94 times (232/94: 40.5%).

Currently, child welfare caseworkers classify these situations under the catchall of 'injurious environment'. In the absence of a specific definition for domestic abuse in the children's code, mandatory reporters and case workers lack clear and intentional direction to watch for the effects of this adult behavior on a child's wellbeing.

Defining this term in the children's code establishes clarity for child welfare practice, training, and assessment protocol.

Please Support HB21-1099

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Proponents:

Kempe Foundation
Colorado's Child Protection Ombudsman
Colorado's Office of The Child's Representative