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SENATE, No. 1516

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
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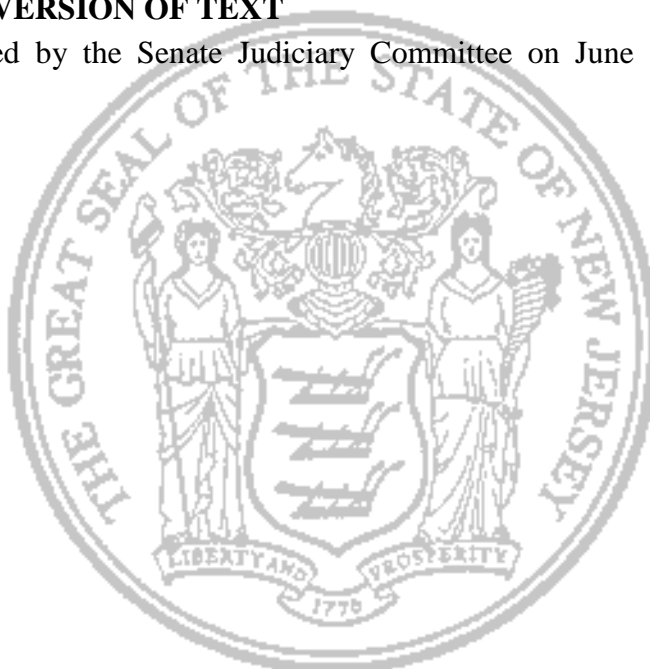
Senator Stack

SYNOPSIS

Authorizes court to include in domestic violence restraining orders a provision making the order applicable to a pregnant victim's child upon birth of the child.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Senate Judiciary Committee on June 12, 2023, with amendments.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/15/2023)

1 AN ACT concerning domestic violence and amending P.L.1991,
2 c.261.

3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
5 of New Jersey:

6

7 1. Section 10 of P.L.1991, c.261 (C.2C:25-26) is amended to
8 read as follows:

9 10. a. When a defendant charged with a crime or offense
10 involving domestic violence is released from custody before trial on
11 bail or personal recognizance, the court authorizing the release may
12 as a condition of release issue an order prohibiting the defendant
13 from having any contact with the victim including, but not limited
14 to, restraining the defendant from entering the victim's residence,
15 place of employment or business, or school, and from harassing or
16 stalking the victim or the victim's friends, co-workers, or relatives
17 in any way. If the victim is pregnant¹, at the victim's request¹ the
18 court may order that the victim's child shall, immediately upon
19 birth, be included in the order. The court may also enter an order
20 prohibiting the defendant from having any contact with any animal
21 owned, possessed, leased, kept, or held by either party or a minor
22 child residing in the household. In addition, the court may enter an
23 order directing the possession of the animal and providing that the
24 animal shall not be disposed of prior to the disposition of the crime
25 or offense. The court may enter an order prohibiting the defendant
26 from possessing any firearm or other weapon enumerated in
27 subsection r. of N.J.S.2C:39-1 and ordering the search for and
28 seizure of any such weapon at any location where the judge has
29 reasonable cause to believe the weapon is located. The judge shall
30 state with specificity the reasons for and scope of the search and
31 seizure authorized by the order.

32 b. The written court order releasing the defendant shall contain
33 the court's directives specifically restricting the defendant's ability
34 to have contact with the victim, the victim's friends, co-workers, or
35 relatives, or any animal owned, possessed, leased, kept, or held by
36 either party or a minor child residing in the household. The clerk of
37 the court or other person designated by the court shall provide a
38 copy of this order to the victim forthwith.

39 c. The victim's location shall remain confidential and shall not
40 appear on any documents or records to which the defendant has
41 access.

42 d. Before bail is set, the defendant's prior record shall be
43 considered by the court. The court shall also conduct a search of
44 the domestic violence central registry. Bail shall be set as soon as
45 is feasible, but in all cases within 24 hours of arrest.

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Senate SJU committee amendments adopted June 12, 2023.

1 e. Once bail is set it shall not be reduced without prior notice to
2 the county prosecutor and the victim. Bail shall not be reduced by a
3 judge other than the judge who originally ordered bail, unless the
4 reasons for the amount of the original bail are available to the judge
5 who reduces the bail and are set forth in the record.

6 f. A victim shall not be prohibited from applying for, and a
7 court shall not be prohibited from issuing, temporary restraints
8 pursuant to this act because the victim has charged any person with
9 commission of a criminal act.

10 (cf: P.L.2011, c.213, s.1)

11
12 2. Section 11 of P.L.1991, c.261 (C.2C:25-27) is amended to
13 read as follows:

14 11. a. When a defendant is found guilty of a crime or offense
15 involving domestic violence and a condition of sentence restricts
16 the defendant's ability to have contact with the victim, the victim's
17 friends, co-workers, or relatives, or an animal owned, possessed,
18 leased, kept, or held by either party or a minor child residing in the
19 household, that condition shall be recorded in an order of the court
20 and a written copy of that order shall be provided to the victim by
21 the clerk of the court or other person designated by the court. If the
22 victim is pregnant ¹, at the victim's request¹ the court may order
23 that the victim's child shall, immediately upon birth, be included in
24 the order. In addition to restricting a defendant's ability to have
25 contact with the victim, the victim's friends, co-workers, or
26 relatives, or an animal owned, possessed, leased, kept, or held by
27 either party or a minor child residing in the household, the court
28 may require the defendant to receive professional counseling from
29 either a private source or a source appointed by the court, and if the
30 court so orders, the court shall require the defendant to provide
31 documentation of attendance at the professional counseling. In any
32 case where the court order contains a requirement that the defendant
33 receive professional counseling, no application by the defendant to
34 dissolve the restraining order shall be granted unless, in addition to
35 any other provisions required by law or conditions ordered by the
36 court, the defendant has completed all required attendance at such
37 counseling.

38 b. In addition the court may enter an order directing the
39 possession of an animal owned, possessed, leased, kept, or held by
40 either party or a minor child residing in the household. Where a
41 person has abused or threatened to abuse such animal, there shall be
42 a presumption that possession of the animal shall be awarded to the
43 non-abusive party.

44 c. (1) When a defendant is found guilty of a crime or offense
45 involving domestic violence, the court shall inform the defendant
46 that the defendant is prohibited from purchasing, owning,
47 possessing, or controlling a firearm pursuant to section 6 of
48 P.L.1979, c.179 (C.2C:39-7) and from receiving or retaining a

1 firearms purchaser identification card or permit to purchase a
2 handgun pursuant to N.J.S.2C:58-3. The court shall order the
3 defendant to arrange for the immediate surrender to a law
4 enforcement officer of any firearm that has not already been seized
5 or surrendered and any firearms purchaser identification card or
6 permit to purchase a handgun possessed by the defendant. No later
7 than five business days after the order is entered, however, the
8 defendant may arrange to sell any surrendered firearm to a licensed
9 retail dealer of firearms who shall be authorized to take possession
10 of that purchased firearm from the law enforcement agency to
11 which it was surrendered no later than 10 business days after the
12 order is entered. Any card or permit issued to the defendant shall be
13 deemed immediately revoked. The court shall establish a process
14 for notifying the appropriate authorities of the conviction requiring
15 the revocation of the card or permit. A law enforcement officer
16 accepting a surrendered firearm shall provide the defendant with a
17 receipt listing the date of surrender, the name of the defendant, and
18 any item that has been surrendered, including the serial number,
19 manufacturer, and model of the surrendered firearm. The defendant
20 shall provide a copy of this receipt to the prosecutor within 48 hours
21 of service of the order, and shall attest under penalty that any
22 firearms owned or possessed at the time of the order have been
23 transferred in accordance with this section and that the defendant
24 currently does not possess any firearms. The defendant alternatively
25 may attest under penalty that he did not own or possess a firearm at
26 the time of the order and currently does not possess a firearm. If
27 the court, upon motion of the prosecutor, finds probable cause that
28 the defendant has failed to surrender any firearm, card, or permit,
29 the court may order a search for and removal of these items at any
30 location where the judge has reasonable cause to believe these items
31 are located. The judge shall state with specificity the reasons for
32 and the scope of the search and seizure authorized by the order.

33 (2) A law enforcement officer who receives a firearm that is
34 surrendered, but not purchased and taken possession of by a
35 licensed retail dealer of firearms within 10 business days of when
36 the order is entered pursuant to paragraph (1) of this subsection,
37 may dispose of the surrendered firearm in accordance with the
38 provisions of N.J.S.2C:64-6. A firearm purchased by a licensed
39 retail dealer from a defendant shall become part of the inventory of
40 the dealer.

41 (cf: P.L.2016, c.91, s.1)

42

43 3. Section 13 of P.L.1991, c.261 (C.2C:25-29) is amended to
44 read as follows:

45 13. a. A hearing shall be held in the Family Part of the
46 Chancery Division of the Superior Court within 10 days of the
47 filing of a complaint pursuant to section 12 of P.L.1991, c.261
48 (C.2C:25-28) in the county where the ex parte restraints were

1 ordered, unless good cause is shown for the hearing to be held
2 elsewhere. A copy of the complaint shall be served on the
3 defendant in conformity with the Rules of Court. If a criminal
4 complaint arising out of the same incident which is the subject
5 matter of a complaint brought under P.L.1981, c.426 (C.2C:25-1 et
6 seq.) or P.L.1991, c.261 (C.2C:25-17 et seq.) has been filed,
7 testimony given by the plaintiff or defendant in the domestic
8 violence matter shall not be used in the simultaneous or subsequent
9 criminal proceeding against the defendant, other than domestic
10 violence contempt matters and where it would otherwise be
11 admissible hearsay under the rules of evidence that govern where a
12 party is unavailable. At the hearing the standard for proving the
13 allegations in the complaint shall be by a preponderance of the
14 evidence. The court shall consider but not be limited to the
15 following factors:

- 16 (1) The previous history of domestic violence between the
17 plaintiff and defendant, including threats, harassment and physical
18 abuse;
- 19 (2) The existence of immediate danger to person or property;
- 20 (3) The financial circumstances of the plaintiff and defendant;
- 21 (4) The best interests of the victim and any child;
- 22 (5) In determining custody and parenting time the protection of
23 the victim's safety; and
- 24 (6) The existence of a verifiable order of protection from
25 another jurisdiction.

26 An order issued under this act shall only restrain or provide
27 damages payable from a person against whom a complaint has been
28 filed under this act and only after a finding or an admission is made
29 that an act of domestic violence was committed by that person. The
30 issue of whether or not a violation of this act occurred, including an
31 act of contempt under this act, shall not be subject to mediation or
32 negotiation in any form. In addition, where a temporary or final
33 order has been issued pursuant to this act, no party shall be ordered
34 to participate in mediation on the issue of custody or parenting time.

35 b. In proceedings in which complaints for restraining orders
36 have been filed, the court shall grant any relief necessary to prevent
37 further abuse. In addition to any other provisions, any restraining
38 order issued by the court shall bar the defendant from purchasing,
39 owning, possessing or controlling a firearm and from receiving or
40 retaining a firearms purchaser identification card or permit to
41 purchase a handgun pursuant to N.J.S.2C:58-3 during the period in
42 which the restraining order is in effect or two years, whichever is
43 greater. The order shall require the immediate surrender of any
44 firearm or other weapon belonging to the defendant. The order
45 shall include notice to the defendant of the penalties for a violation
46 of any provision of the order, including but not limited to the
47 penalties for contempt of court and unlawful possession of a firearm
48 or other weapon pursuant to N.J.S.2C:39-5.

1 A law enforcement officer shall accompany the defendant, or
2 may proceed without the defendant if necessary, to any place where
3 any firearm or other weapon belonging to the defendant is located
4 to ensure that the defendant does not gain access to any firearm or
5 other weapon, and a law enforcement officer shall take custody of
6 any firearm or other weapon belonging to the defendant. If the
7 order prohibits the defendant from returning to the scene of
8 domestic violence or other place where firearms or other weapons
9 belonging to the defendant are located, any firearm or other weapon
10 located there shall be seized by a law enforcement officer. The
11 provisions of this subsection requiring the surrender or removal of a
12 firearm, card, or permit shall not apply to any law enforcement
13 officer while actually on duty, or to any member of the Armed
14 Forces of the United States or member of the National Guard while
15 actually on duty or traveling to or from an authorized place of duty.
16 At the hearing the judge of the Family Part of the Chancery
17 Division of the Superior Court may issue an order granting any or
18 all of the following relief:

19 (1) An order restraining the defendant from subjecting the
20 victim to domestic violence, as defined in this act.

21 (2) An order granting exclusive possession to the plaintiff of the
22 residence or household regardless of whether the residence or
23 household is jointly or solely owned by the parties or jointly or
24 solely leased by the parties. This order shall not in any manner
25 affect title or interest to any real property held by either party or
26 both jointly. If it is not possible for the victim to remain in the
27 residence, the court may order the defendant to pay the victim's rent
28 at a residence other than the one previously shared by the parties if
29 the defendant is found to have a duty to support the victim and the
30 victim requires alternative housing.

31 (3) An order providing for parenting time. The order shall
32 protect the safety and well-being of the plaintiff and minor children
33 and shall specify the place and frequency of parenting time.
34 Parenting time arrangements shall not compromise any other
35 remedy provided by the court by requiring or encouraging contact
36 between the plaintiff and defendant. Orders for parenting time may
37 include a designation of a place of parenting time away from the
38 plaintiff, the participation of a third party, or supervised parenting
39 time.

40 (a) The court shall consider a request by a custodial parent who
41 has been subjected to domestic violence by a person with parenting
42 time rights to a child in the parent's custody for an investigation or
43 evaluation by the appropriate agency to assess the risk of harm to
44 the child prior to the entry of a parenting time order. Any denial of
45 such a request must be on the record and shall only be made if the
46 judge finds the request to be arbitrary or capricious.

47 (b) The court shall consider suspension of the parenting time
48 order and hold an emergency hearing upon an application made by

1 the plaintiff certifying under oath that the defendant's access to the
2 child pursuant to the parenting time order has threatened the safety
3 and well-being of the child.

4 (4) An order requiring the defendant to pay to the victim
5 monetary compensation for losses suffered as a direct result of the
6 act of domestic violence. The order may require the defendant to
7 pay the victim directly, to reimburse the Victims of Crime
8 Compensation Office for any and all compensation paid by the
9 Victims of Crime Compensation Office directly to or on behalf of
10 the victim, and may require that the defendant reimburse any parties
11 that may have compensated the victim, as the court may determine.
12 Compensatory losses shall include, but not be limited to, loss of
13 earnings or other support, including child or spousal support, out-
14 of-pocket losses for injuries sustained, cost of repair or replacement
15 of real or personal property damaged or destroyed or taken by the
16 defendant, cost of counseling for the victim, moving or other travel
17 expenses, reasonable attorney's fees, court costs, and compensation
18 for pain and suffering. Where appropriate, punitive damages may be
19 awarded in addition to compensatory damages.

20 (5) An order requiring the defendant to receive professional
21 domestic violence counseling from either a private source or a
22 source appointed by the court and, in that event, requiring the
23 defendant to provide the court at specified intervals with
24 documentation of attendance at the professional counseling. The
25 court may order the defendant to pay for the professional
26 counseling. No application by the defendant to dissolve a final
27 order which contains a requirement for attendance at professional
28 counseling pursuant to this paragraph shall be granted by the court
29 unless, in addition to any other provisions required by law or
30 conditions ordered by the court, the defendant has completed all
31 required attendance at such counseling.

32 (6) An order restraining the defendant from entering the
33 residence, property, school, or place of employment of the victim or
34 of other family or household members of the victim and requiring
35 the defendant to stay away from any specified place that is named
36 in the order and is frequented regularly by the victim or other
37 family or household members.

38 (7) An order restraining the defendant from making contact with
39 the plaintiff or others, including an order forbidding the defendant
40 from personally or through an agent initiating any communication
41 likely to cause annoyance or alarm including, but not limited to,
42 personal, written, or telephone contact with the victim or other
43 family members, or their employers, employees, or fellow workers,
44 or others with whom communication would be likely to cause
45 annoyance or alarm to the victim.

46 (8) An order requiring that the defendant make or continue to
47 make rent or mortgage payments on the residence occupied by the
48 victim if the defendant is found to have a duty to support the victim

1 or other dependent household members; provided that this issue has
2 not been resolved or is not being litigated between the parties in
3 another action.

4 (9) An order granting either party temporary possession of
5 specified personal property, such as an automobile, checkbook,
6 documentation of health insurance, an identification document, a
7 key, and other personal effects.

8 (10) An order awarding emergency monetary relief, including
9 emergency support for minor children, to the victim and other
10 dependents, if any. An ongoing obligation of support shall be
11 determined at a later date pursuant to applicable law.

12 (11) An order awarding temporary custody of a minor child.
13 The court shall presume that the best interests of the child are
14 served by an award of custody to the non-abusive parent.

15 (12) An order requiring that a law enforcement officer
16 accompany either party to the residence or any shared business
17 premises to supervise the removal of personal belongings in order
18 to ensure the personal safety of the plaintiff when a restraining
19 order has been issued. This order shall be restricted in duration.

20 (13) (Deleted by amendment, P.L.1995, c.242).

21 (14) An order granting any other appropriate relief for the
22 plaintiff and dependent children, provided that the plaintiff consents
23 to such relief, including relief requested by the plaintiff at the final
24 hearing, whether or not the plaintiff requested such relief at the time
25 of the granting of the initial emergency order.

26 (15) An order that requires that the defendant report to the
27 intake unit of the Family Part of the Chancery Division of the
28 Superior Court for monitoring of any other provision of the order.

29 (16) In addition to the order required by this subsection
30 prohibiting the defendant from possessing any firearm, the court
31 may also issue an order prohibiting the defendant from possessing
32 any other weapon enumerated in subsection r. of N.J.S.2C:39-1 and
33 ordering the search for and seizure of any firearm or other weapon
34 at any location where the judge has reasonable cause to believe the
35 weapon is located. The judge shall state with specificity the reasons
36 for and scope of the search and seizure authorized by the order.

37 (17) An order prohibiting the defendant from stalking or
38 following, or threatening to harm, to stalk or to follow, the
39 complainant or any other person named in the order in a manner
40 that, taken in the context of past actions of the defendant, would put
41 the complainant in reasonable fear that the defendant would cause
42 the death or injury of the complainant or any other person.
43 Behavior prohibited under this act includes, but is not limited to,
44 behavior prohibited under the provisions of P.L.1992, c.209
45 (C.2C:12-10).

46 (18) An order requiring the defendant to undergo a psychiatric
47 evaluation.

1 (19) An order directing the possession of any animal owned,
2 possessed, leased, kept, or held by either party or a minor child
3 residing in the household. Where a person has abused or threatened
4 to abuse such animal, there shall be a presumption that possession
5 of the animal shall be awarded to the non-abusive party.

6 (20) ¹**[An]** At the plaintiff's request, an¹ order providing that, if
7 the plaintiff is pregnant, the plaintiff's child shall be included in the
8 restraining order immediately upon birth.

9 c. Notice of orders issued pursuant to this section shall be sent
10 by the clerk of the Family Part of the Chancery Division of the
11 Superior Court or other person designated by the court to the
12 appropriate chiefs of police, members of the State Police and any
13 other appropriate law enforcement agency.

14 d. Upon good cause shown, any final order may be dissolved or
15 modified upon application to the Family Part of the Chancery
16 Division of the Superior Court, but only if the judge who dissolves
17 or modifies the order is the same judge who entered the order, or
18 has available a complete record of the hearing or hearings on which
19 the order was based.

20 e. Prior to the issuance of any order pursuant to this section, the
21 court shall order that a search be made of the domestic violence
22 central registry.

23 (cf: P.L.2016, c.91, s.3)

24
25 4. This act shall take effect ¹**[immediately]** on the first day of
26 the third month next following the date of enactment, but the
27 Administrative Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts
28 may take such anticipatory action as is necessary for the
29 implementation of the act¹.