

Dear Lawmaker,

Please oppose The Predator Bill SB 5205!

[SB 5205](#), aka The Predator Bill, will remove children from their safe parent into the care of unsafe, abusive and sex-offender parents by removing mandatory restrictions on abusers in family court. This bill enables insufficiently supervised contact of sex offenders with their children victims. Domestic violence is perpetuated by forced contact with an abuser and The Predator Bill does exactly that. We are talking about children's lives. A [Study by the Center of Judicial Excellence](#), shows that many of the cases involving a parent killing a child “involve a family court knowingly placing kids in harms way.” See the growing list of nonprofits and victim advocate organizations that OPPOSE this bill at the end.

RCW 26.09.191 is **the** RCW when it comes to the safety and protection of survivors of domestic violence in custody disputes, there is separate RCW for parenting plans when abuse is not a factor. Lawmakers have been tricked about this bill as the procedure of this bill has been dishonest: 1) the real changes in this bill are nearly impossible to find 2) the [summary](#) lacks the real intent and substantive changes, and 3) There was a work-session in preparation for this bill, but almost all the substantive harmful changes were added **after** the work-session concluded, for which no report has been made available to the public. The only two citizens who testified for this bill in the [Law and Justice Hearing](#) both had Domestic Violence Protection Orders **against** them. Regrettably most of the domestic violence community learned of this bill after this hearing. It is a Red Flag that there is a domestic violence bill without any input or support from any domestic violence groups or survivors.

To summarize, the bill takes much of the current RCW language that **requires** a judge to protect the victim and replaces it with **discretionary** language—and every place where it allows **discretion** for a judge to order a safer parenting plan, **it requires a judge to allow a less safe parenting plan**. We all know that where there lies discretion, lies more power for the party with more money. Many mothers were primary parents and may also have been SAHMs, or who worked low income or part time jobs while caring for children. Abuse victims are also systematically deprived of marital funds and leave marriages poorer than their counterparts. Abusers damage their victim so they can point the finger at them that they're the problem and tear apart the relationship between the victim and child(ren) as their ultimate act of punishment for the victim leaving. Any discretion made that is favorable to the abuser will therefore cause irreparable harm to the child.

This bill claims to assist parents with making decisions in their life, but the bill in plain language transfers control in decision making from the victim to the abuser. When victims do not have sole decision-making, their former abuser is able to interfere and obstruct every decision in their child's life, simply to harass their victim and they never stop. Control in decision making requires constant contact, and abusers use this avenue to harass and threaten their victims long after they have left.

Proponents of this bill say they are clarifying the RCW with case law, however, in court each side proposes their own case law to support their case, and in this bill only abusers have presented case law, of which most is debatable. The current RCW already has many meritless harmful protections for abusers. Not even the existing 191 protections are being applied appropriately to protect victims in the courts. Victims need stronger and wider protections that limit discretion, this bill does the opposite of that.

An itemized list of changes is not apparent in the bill, we have provided this document *No to SB 5205 Itemized List of Changes* ([Webpage](#)) ([Google Doc](#)) that lists the actual changes and how it harms victims. Click the link or reply for an emailed copy. Thank you for reading.

Authored by these DV survivors:

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Joya Goodhue, M.S., LMHCA, LMT, mother, survivor/warrior

Organizations Who Oppose this Legislation

Legal Voice

Family Violence Appellate Project

Lifewire

Sexual Violence Law Center

And further supported by these DV survivor parents:

Gretchen Goodman Pawling

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