



**SB 1000 – Victim’s Digital Safety Act**

*Safeguarding victims of digital harassment and empowering domestic violence survivors*

**SUMMARY**

SB 1000 addresses digital harassment by requiring companies to swiftly cut off access for abusers at the request of a victim, ensuring immediate protection for one of our most vulnerable populations. This bill creates protections for domestic violence victims, specifically addressing the increasingly prevalent issue of digital abuse and control.

**BACKGROUND**

The National Domestic Violence Hotline reports that one in four women and one in seven men are survivors of severe domestic violence in their lifetime. An average of 24 people per minute are victims of rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner in the United States — more than 12 million women and men over the course of a single year. Almost half of all women and men in the US have experienced psychological aggression by an intimate partner in their lifetime.<sup>1</sup>

Technology advancements and an increase in the use of technology have become troubling tools in cases of domestic violence and harassment. Perpetrators leverage apps and accounts to control everyday objects within the victims’ possession.<sup>2</sup> Even after the abuser has left, the connected devices often remain, continuing to be used as a means of intimidating victims.<sup>3</sup>

In 2022, the Federal Government passed the Safe Connections Act, a bill that protects the safety and privacy of domestic violence survivors. It requires mobile service providers to sever a line of a survivor, and any individual in the care of the survivor, from a shared mobile service contract with an abuser. The bill empowers survivors to separate a mobile phone line without facing contract based penalties. There is little parity between federal rules related to mobile service accounts and connected devices. Domestic violence experts and the Federal Communications Commission point to the Safe Connections Act as a framework for further legislation to expand the rights of victims.<sup>4</sup>

**THE PROBLEM**

While technology can serve as a valuable resource for victims, it is unfortunately frequently abused by perpetrators of domestic violence. Abusers can use modern technology to monitor, harass, threaten, and violate their victims.

According to domestic violence experts, the misuse of modern technology is a significant contributing factor in the rise of new domestic violence cases. Domestic violence organizations have reported a surge of domestic abuse calls related to internet connected home devices and shared accounts. Reports indicate an uptick in concerns about losing control of Wi-Fi-enabled doors, speakers, thermostats, lights, cameras, and vehicles.

Experts share particular concern over modern vehicles. Sometimes referred to as "smartphones on wheels." Modern vehicles are equipped with internet-connected functions, data gathering capacities, cameras, seat weight sensors, and GPS tracking – all of which can be used to track victims.

Technology has become an alarming new tool for abuse. Abusers can remotely control common household equipment to monitor, listen to, intimidate, or wield power over victims by utilizing apps on cellphones that are connected to internet-enabled devices in a home. Even after an abuser leaves a home, the presence of these devices and shared accounts continues to be exploited, leaving victims with limited recourse.

**THE SOLUTION**

SB 1000 is a crucial measure to protect domestic violence victims from digital abuse and control. This bill will prevent abusers from using, controlling, or remotely harassing their victims when instances of abuse are reported by a victim – ensuring California law continues to empower and protect victims even as technology advances.

<sup>1</sup> [The National Domestic Violence Hotline](#)

<sup>2</sup> [The Predator in Your Pocket. A Multidisciplinary Assessment of the Stalkerware Application Industry](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Thermostats, Locks and Lights: Digital Tools of Domestic Abuse](#)

<sup>4</sup> [FCC Chair Proposes Expansion of Safe Connections Act to Cover Internet-Connected Cars](#)

## **SUPPORT**

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- [Alliance for HOPE International](#)
- Oakland Privacy
- Voices Survivor Advocacy
- California Family Justice Network
- San Francisco Safe House
- Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center
- Chino Police Department

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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