

Legal Services of New Jersey
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**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS OFTEN PINNED DOWN
BY ABUSERS' COERCIVE CONTROLS**

EDISON — The latest newsletter of Legal Services of New Jersey (LSNJ) focuses on how domestic violence abusers often turn to coercive controls to intimidate, frighten, and dominate victims' lives, safety and basic human rights.

Such coercive control tactics in marital and romantic relationships can range from threatening to file fake complaints that children in the household are being abused or call ICE, refusing to allow the victim to go alone to medical appointments, vowing to kill the individual's siblings or pet, and isolating the victim from family and friends, among all sorts of other intimidating ploys.

The bilingual publication, "Looking Out For Your Legal Rights," may be viewed online at www.lsnjlaw.org/media-center/publications.

The newsletter also includes articles about new work and time-limit requirements for certain individuals qualifying for SNAP benefits, and various resources for possible help in paying utility bills and related problems.

The featured article on coercive control notes remaining in a situation is detrimental in the long run. It states, "One of the most difficult things survivors can do is take that first step and realize the situation they are in is unhealthy and harmful to them."

At the beginning of last year, coercive control was added as a factor to the State's Prevention of Domestic Violence Act and criminal code. It stipulates that judges, when considering whether to approve final restraining orders to protect victims of abusers, weigh the relevancy of one of any of eight different factors of coercive control.

The following are the eight factors or categories:

- Isolating the person from friends, relatives, transportation, medical care, or other source of support
- Depriving the person of basic necessities
- Monitoring the person's movements, communication, daily behavior, finances, economic resources, or access to services
- Compelling the person by force, threat, or intimidation, including, but not limited to threats based on actual or suspected immigration status
- Threatening to make or making baseless reports to the police, courts, the Division of Child Protection and Permanency within the Department of Children and Families, the Board of Social Services, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or other parties
- Threatening to harm or kill the individual's relative or pet
- Threatening to deny or interfere with an individual's custody or parental time, other than through enforcement of a valid custody or arrangement or court order pursuant to current law including, but not limited to, an order issued pursuant to Title 9 of the revised statutes
- Any other factors or circumstances that the court deems relevant or material

Legal Services of New Jersey (LSNJ), located in Edison, provides free essential legal aid in civil matters to low-income people.