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October 2026

LEGAL SERVICES NEWSLETTER FOCUSES ON CHOICES FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS SEEKING PROTECTION

EDISON — The October newsletter of Legal Services of New Jersey (LSNJ) centers on important laws and procedures involving various forms of domestic violence, and how victims can seek protection from abusers.

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

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month and the newsletter lists the 19 crimes under NJ state laws and procedures that can be linked to situations of alleged abuse and other acts of domestic violence.

“If you think you have been a victim of any of these crimes, you should contact any attorney or your local domestic violence agency,” the article stresses. Help also is available from the LSNJLAW Hotline at www.lsnjlawhotline.org or 1-888-576-5529.

The newsletter deals with obtaining restraining orders against abusers, whose alleged violations are tied to any of 19 specified NJ criminal laws, including, among others, harassment, assault, terroristic threats, restraint, coercion and cyber-harassment.

Depending upon the circumstances, victims can request restraining orders under the so-state’s Prevention of Domestic Violence Act.

Essentially, a multi-pronged process begins when the victim turns to the courts seeking relief in what’s known as a temporary restraining order or TRO. That sets in motion a trial in which a judge will decide whether a final restraining order or FRO should be issued. That’s when the victim can choose to dismiss the TRO and effectively negate the FRO hearing or consider an alternative offered by the attorney for the alleged abuser or a neutral third party to settle the case with a so-called “consent order with civil restraints.”

The newsletter article notes civil restraints might include restraining a party from communicating with the other, engaging in domestic violence, stalking, harassing, and all sorts of other agreed-to prohibitions.

The article offers a detailed explanation of the civil restraints process, including its pros and cons, and emphasizes that choosing a civil consent order means “you are giving up your right to have a trial.”

Another article focuses on LSNJ’s new Substance Use Project (SUD), which offers help in dealing with many civil legal problems facing low-income residents in recovery.

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