

When I was leaving my abusive partner, I was terrified by him. I had evidence and witnesses that confirmed that it was reasonable for me to be afraid, and I very much wanted to obtain a protection order. I was discouraged from doing so after watching what my friend went through in her efforts to obtain and maintain protection. Unfortunately the absence of a protection order disqualified me from receiving any support from organizations that exist to help Survivors of domestic violence. As a result, my sister and I became homeless in pursuit of any form of safety from my abuser.

Why didn't I obtain a protection order? Because I had seen that the man who had raped my friend was able to force her to appear in court repeatedly by: stalling proceeding by refusing to provide a DNA sample (prompting the Judge to postpone the hearing minutes after it was scheduled to begin); and providing a wrong address (which he used to successfully appeal a ruling he hadn't bothered to attend; reopening the case, and forcing my friend to attend a new round of hearings).

Having seen what my friend went through, I realized that if I were to file for a protection order, my ex would have been able to trap me in one location for as long as he was able to keep the order in deliberations. If I fought him, I would be unable to move away from the courthouse until the order was resolved. Even if the result was favorable, I would have only had protection for a few months before my abuser would be empowered to continue to terrorize me when the process started all over.

Requiring a Survivor to renew a protection order less than a year from the last time they had to one or more of the following take time off of work, arrange transportation, and possibly pay for representation, before making them face their attacker in court again is inhumane. [But even if humanity isn't your concern, it's a waste of court hours and taxpayer money.]

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