

# 2010

## State Law Report Card

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## Pennsylvania

**A protection order is a FREE court order that can protect you from an abusive dating partner. This order can prevent your current or ex-partner from:**

- Threatening or abusing you
- Contacting or coming near you or your family
- Coming to your school, home or work
- Possessing a gun

**The order may also require your current or ex-partner to:**

- Move out of your home
- Agree to a custody and visitation schedule, if you have children
- Pay you child support or spousal support
- Pay your attorney's fees or pay for other harm you suffered
- Do anything else the court finds is necessary for your protection

A protection order can be changed if things in your life change (for example, if you transfer to a new school or get a new job).

**You can get a protection order against someone who:**

- You are/were sexually involved with, living with or married to OR
- You have a child with OR
- You are related to by blood or marriage

The law may allow you to get a protection order against someone you are or were dating.

**The law requires you to show that your current or ex-partner:**

- Threatened to, attempted to or actually physically abused you OR
- Sexually abused you OR
- Stalked you

Other types of abuse may also qualify you for a protection order.

**If you are under 18 years old, a parent, adult household member or court-appointed guardian may go to court with you to file for a protection order on your behalf. Pennsylvania law does not say at what age you can file for a protection order on your own behalf. If you are able to file on your own behalf, the law does not say whether the court has to notify your parent/guardian if you receive a protection order.**

**This is the law in your state only. The law is different in every state.**

### What other laws do you need to know about?

All teens can consent to:

- Birth control services\*
- Testing and treatment for HIV and sexually transmitted infections
- Medical care during pregnancy
- Medical care for their child(ren)

\*You must be 14 or older.

If you are a minor, you must have your parent's consent to have an abortion. If you put your child up for adoption, your parents will be notified.

### What are schools doing about dating violence?

Pennsylvania law does not include information about dating violence in schools.

### How can Pennsylvania improve its response to teen dating violence?

- Allow people in dating relationships to file for protection orders.
- Allow all minors to file for protection orders without parental involvement.
- Allow courts to issue protection orders against minor abusers.
- Allow all minors to access health services without parental involvement.

**Break the Cycle**

Empowering Youth to End Domestic Violence

If you or someone you know is experiencing abuse in their relationship go to [www.thesafespace.org](http://www.thesafespace.org)