



## Key Message

Interpersonal violence is a behavior that asserts power or control over another person that includes various forms of abuse, which may negatively impact service member readiness and resiliency. States can enhance statutes relating to domestic violence, sexual assault and filing procedures for protection orders to assist victims of interpersonal violence.

## Discussion Points

1. Interpersonal violence is a pattern of behavior used to establish power and control over another person. It can take several forms – including physical, emotional, sexual, economic, verbal and psychological abuse.
2. The military takes incidents of violence, abuse, sexual assault and harassment seriously and is committed to a timely response to reports of violence. Often, both civilian and military authorities are involved in addressing domestic violence complaints.
3. The impact of interpersonal violence extends beyond the individual victim; it can also undermine the mission readiness of military units and compromise national security. A military family's personal well-being is a critical factor when it comes to their ability to effectively serve the country.
4. By educating state officials on the expanded protections for victims of interpersonal violence, we are ensuring that service members and their families have the support they need.
5. States have implemented the following policies that specifically address the issue of interpersonal violence:
  - Allow military protective orders to be admitted as evidence when applying for civilian protective orders.
  - Extend the legal authority of commanders beyond duty times and increase the responsibility of peace officers.
  - Allow special victims' counsel to apply for a protective order on behalf of a victim.
  - Allow victims to access postdischarge travel funds to fully cover the expense of traveling to and from and participating in court proceedings.
  - Allow victims of military sexual trauma or interpersonal violence to appear virtually in court proceedings.
  - Amend domestic violence definitions to include coercive control.



The military's service branches have an obligation to know what is happening with their service members both while they are on and off duty. Through the implementation of interpersonal violence policies at the state level, we empower victims, deter offenders and create an environment for military families that is conducive to resilience and readiness.