



Canadian Center for Women's Empowerment STATEMENT ON THE PASSING OF KEIRA'S LAW

Ottawa, April 24, 2023. The Canadian Center for Women's Empowerment (CCFWE) is the only national non-profit organization dedicated to empowering survivors of all forms of Economic Abuse (economic control, economic exploitation, and employment sabotage). CCFWE supports the recent passing of Bill C-233 by Canadian lawmakers. Bill C-233, otherwise known as "Keira's Law," ensures continuing education for judges on matters related to domestic violence and coercive control.

For CCFWE, it is crucial for judicial staff to understand the different patterns of abuse that perpetrators use to control a victim of domestic violence even after separation when deciding cases involving intimate partner violence.

CCFWE concedes there is a lack of awareness about non-physical, and hidden forms of domestic violence, such as emotional and Economic Abuse. Often overlooked, these types of abuse are far too common. The lack of knowledge of coercive control within the judicial system is dangerous. As the case of little Keira demonstrated, the lack of awareness or training jeopardizes the safety of women and children across the country.

Economic Abuse is recognized as part of coercive controlling behaviour aimed to gain complete control over a victim's finances by impeding the ability of the victim to obtain, use, and maintain economic resources. Examples include:

- Taking away any income.
- Limiting access to and information on household finances.
- Interfering with employment.
- Accumulating debt on joint bank accounts.

Unlike physical forms of abuse, Economic Abuse and coercive control can continue long after victims flee abusive relationships as abusers maintain or adapt their tactics post-separation. Survivors can be left with no financial resources, unable to access bank accounts, and highly indebted.

Recent amendments in the federal Divorce Act include Financial Abuse as a form of family violence that judges need to consider when assessing a child's best interest. However, in order to effectively save and protect women and children in the future, continuous education for judges on Economic Abuse, coercive control and other forms of domestic violence is essential. The passing of Keira's law is a crucial first step in ensuring survivors are properly heard and supported.

About the Canadian Center for Women's Empowerment (CCFWE)

The Canadian Center for Women's Empowerment (CCFWE) is the only Canadian national non for profit organization based in Ottawa dedicated to addressing Economic Abuse and injustice through advocacy, education, research, economic empowerment, and policy change.

CCFWE works collaboratively with organizations and individuals to develop a comprehensive approach that enables domestic violence survivors to recover from Economic Abuse. It also addresses critical policy gaps preventing survivors from recovering and becoming economically secure and independent.

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