

TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH
LEGISLATURE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

August 15, 2025

Second

Regular Session, 2025

H. B. 24- 52

A BILL FOR AN ACT

An act to strengthen current domestic and family violence laws to ensure the protections of women and children and to recognize and penalize digital and electronic harassment as acts of domestic and family violence; and for other such purposes

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE 24TH NORTHERN MARIANAS
COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE:**

1 **Section 1. Short Title.** This Act shall be named the “Violence Against
2 Women and Children Act of 2025.”

3 **Section 2. Findings and Purpose.** The Legislature finds that domestic and
4 family violence continues to have a devastating and disproportionate impact on
5 women and children. These acts of violence deprive the most vulnerable members
6 of our community their safety and peace of mind. As a community, there must be a
7 zero tolerance stance against all forms of violence and abuse against our women
8 and children.

9 In recent years, domestic violence has evolved to include digital and
10 electronic harassment with perpetrators using technology to harass, threaten, or
11 control victims aside from traditional patterns of physical, mental, and emotional

1 abuse. Updating our laws to address modern forms of abuse and increasing
2 protections is significant and necessary. Therefore, the intent of this Act is to amend
3 existing law to specifically address and provide enhanced protections for women
4 and children who are victims of domestic violence, and to adapt the law to
5 contemporary forms of abuse, including those perpetrated through digital and
6 electronic means, such as social media.

7 **Section 3. Enactment.** Title 6 Crimes and Criminal Procedures, Division 1
8 Crimes Against Person and Property, Chapter 4: Robbery; Kidnapping; Other
9 Crimes Against the Person, Article 5. Domestic Violence Section 1461 (a)(1) is
10 hereby amended by adding new subsection (M) and (N) to read as follows:

11 “(M) Digital or Electronic Abuse, which is conduct using any form of social
12 media, text message, email, website, or other electronic communication to
13 intentionally and maliciously harass, stalk, or threaten a family or household
14 member. This includes, but is not limited to:

15 (1) Cyberstalking: A knowing and willful course of conduct directed
16 at a specific person, using electronic communication, which seriously
17 alarms, annoys, or harasses the person, and which serves no legitimate
18 purpose.

19 (2) Threatening Content: Posting or sending images, videos, text, or
20 audio that threaten physical, sexual, or emotional harm.

21 (3) Nonconsensual Sharing of Intimate Images: Publishing or

1 distributing private or sexually explicit images or videos of a person without
2 their consent ("revenge porn").

3 (4) Impersonation: Creating a social media account or other digital
4 profile in the victim's name to spread false information, harass others, or
5 otherwise cause harm.

6 (5) Monitoring and Tracking: Using technology, such as spyware,
7 GPS trackers, or social media check-ins, to monitor a person's location,
8 communications, or activities without their consent.

9 (N) "Violence Against a Woman": Any act of gender-based violence that
10 results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or
11 suffering to a woman, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary
12 deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life."

13 **Section 4. Amendment.** Title 6 Crimes and Criminal Procedures, Division
14 1 Crimes Against Person and Property, Chapter 4: Robbery; Kidnapping; Other
15 Crimes Against the Person, Article 5. Domestic Violence Section 1461 (a)(1)is
16 hereby amended by adding new subsection (6) to read as follows:

17 "(6) Penalties:

18 (a) Mandatory Minimum Sentences: Notwithstanding any other
19 provision of law, all crimes of domestic violence, including acts of Digital
20 or Electronic Abuse, resulting in bodily injury or substantial emotional
21 distress against a woman or a minor child, shall carry a mandatory minimum

1 sentence of not less than 90 days imprisonment and a mandatory fine of not
2 less than \$1,000.

3 (b) Domestic Violence with a Firearm: Any person who
4 commits an act of domestic violence as defined in 6 CMC § 1461 with a
5 firearm or other deadly weapon shall be guilty of a felony and shall be
6 sentenced to a term of imprisonment of not less than 5 years.

7 (c) Repeat Offenders: A person convicted of a second or
8 subsequent domestic violence offense against a woman or a minor child, as
9 defined in 6 CMC § 1461, shall be charged with a felony and shall be
10 sentenced to a term of imprisonment of not less than 2 years.”

11 **Section 5. Amendment.** Title 6 Crimes and Criminal Procedures, Division
12 1 Crimes Against Person and Property, Chapter 4: Robbery; Kidnapping; Other
13 Crimes Against the Person, Article 5. Domestic Violence Section 1465 is hereby
14 amended by adding new subsection (c) to read as follows:

15 “(c) The Department of Public Safety shall establish a mandatory
16 training program for all officers on the investigation and prosecution of
17 domestic violence, with a specific focus on violence against women and the
18 collection and preservation of digital evidence, including social media
19 posts, text messages, and other electronic communications.”

20 **Section 6. Amendment.** Title 6 Crimes and Criminal Procedures, Division
21 1 Crimes Against Person and Property, Chapter 4: Robbery; Kidnapping; Other

1 Crimes Against the Person, Article 5. Domestic Violence Section 1467 (a) is hereby
2 amended by adding new subsection (3) to read as follows:

3 “(3) If the law enforcement officer has probable cause of digital or
4 electronic abuse.”

5 **Section 7. Amendment.** Title 8 Family Law & Probate, Division 1
6 Domestic Relations, Chapter 9 Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act
7 Article 2 Civil Orders for Protection Section 1916 (b) is hereby amended by adding
8 new subsections (11) and (12) to read as follows:

9 “(11) Order the respondent to temporarily surrender all electronic
10 devices capable of internet communication upon a finding of digital
11 harassment.

12 “(12) Order the respondent to remove any threatening, harassing, or
13 intimate content posted about the victim online.”

14 **Section 8. Severability.** If any provisions of this Act or the application of
15 any such provision to any person or circumstance should be held invalid by a court
16 of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of this Act or the application of its
17 provisions to persons or circumstances other than those to which it is held invalid
18 shall not be affected thereby.

19 **Section 9. Savings Clause.** This Act and any repealer contained herein
20 shall not be construed as affecting any existing right acquired under contract or
21 acquired under statutes repealed or under any rule, regulation, or order adopted

1 under the statutes. Repealers contained in this Act shall not affect any proceeding
2 instituted under or pursuant to prior law. The enactment of the Act shall not have
3 the effect of terminating, or in any way modifying, any liability, civil or criminal,
4 which shall already be in existence on the date this Act becomes effective.

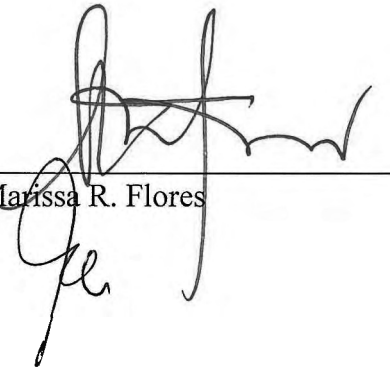
5 **Section 10. Effective Date.** This Act shall take effect upon its approval by
6 the Governor, or its becoming law without such approval.

Prefiled: 8/15/2025

Date: _____

Introduced by: _____

Rep. Marissa R. Flores



Introduction Purposes Only

Reviewed for ~~Legal Sufficiency~~ by:

Joseph A. Day 8/8/25
House Legal Counsel