

# 2010

## State Law Report Card



### Access to Protection Orders

In Vermont, minors can obtain Protection Orders (POs),<sup>1</sup> but the law does not specify whether POs can be granted against minor abusers. Vermont also allows people in dating relationships to seek POs against their abusers.<sup>2</sup>

### Procedure

State law does not specify whether minors can petition for POs on their own behalf. A family/household member may petition for a PO on the minor's behalf.<sup>3</sup> If a minor is able to file on their own behalf, Vermont law does not specify whether the parent or guardian of the minor will be notified about the PO.

### Definition of Abuse

A judge may issue a PO when the respondent has physically abused, sexually abused, threatened to physically abuse or stalked the petitioner.<sup>4</sup> The statute fails to explicitly recognize harassment as a form of abuse that qualifies for relief. The statute may recognize other forms of abuse not specifically listed here.

### Relief Available

The court may order<sup>5</sup> the respondent to:

- stay away from the petitioner;
- vacate the petitioner's residence;
- comply with a custody/visitation schedule;
- pay child support; and/or
- pay spousal support.

The statute may allow other forms of relief not specifically listed here and may cover individuals other than the petitioner. The Protection Order is modifiable.<sup>6</sup>

### Minors' Access to Sensitive Services<sup>7,8</sup>

All minors can consent to:

- HIV/STI testing and treatment\*
- Adoption

\*Includes HIV testing only, not treatment.

Some minors may consent to contraceptive services.

### School Response to Dating Violence

Vermont law does not provide for a school response to dating violence.

### Recommendations for Immediate Policy Change

In order to improve Vermont's response to teen dating violence, the following changes are recommended:

- Allow minors to petition for POs on their own behalf and explicitly describe the procedure for doing so.
- Explicitly allow courts to issue POs against minors.
- Allow victims of intimate partner harassment to access POs.
- Allow all minors to access all sensitive services, including prenatal care, medical care for a child, and abortion without parental involvement.

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A graphic for the Vermont State Law Report Card. It features a blue background. On the left is a yellow silhouette of the state of Vermont. To the right of the map is a white letter 'B' inside an orange circle. Below the map and circle, the word 'Vermont' is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

**Vermont**

### References

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<sup>1</sup> VT. STAT. ANN. TIT. 15 § 1103(a) (2009).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* § 1101(2).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* § 1103(a).

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* § 1101(1).

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* § 1103(C)(2).

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* § 1103(e).

<sup>7</sup> Guttmacher Institute, An overview of minors' consent law, *State Policies in Brief*, New York: Guttmacher Institute, 2009, [http://www.guttmacher.org/statecenter/spibs/spib\\_OMCL.pdf](http://www.guttmacher.org/statecenter/spibs/spib_OMCL.pdf), accessed December 1, 2009.

<sup>8</sup> Guttmacher Institute, Minors' Access to STI Services, *State Policies in Brief*, New York: Guttmacher Institute, 2009, [http://www.guttmacher.org/statecenter/spibs/spib\\_MASS.pdf](http://www.guttmacher.org/statecenter/spibs/spib_MASS.pdf), accessed December 1, 2009.

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