

July 8, 2024

Submission on Family Violence Law to the Ministers of Arts, Culture and Status of Women, Children and Family Services, and Justice

By: Jennifer Koshan, Ampee Minhas, Athina Pantazopoulos & Sasha Reid

Legislation Commented On: *Family Law Act*, [SA 2003, c F-4.5](#); *Protection Against Family Violence Act*, [RSA 2000, c P-27](#)

Authors' Note:

This law reform submission was delivered to the Government of Alberta, Ministers of Arts, Culture and Status of Women, Children and Family Services, and Justice, on July 8, 2024. Below we provide the Introduction to the submission, a full version of which is available [here](#).

This submission is made in response to the development of a new 10-year strategy to end gender-based violence in Alberta, part of [Alberta's participation](#) in the [National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence](#) (NAP). As noted in Pillar 3 of the NAP, a Responsive Justice System is an important part of any such strategy. Although Alberta has made good progress in its response to gender-based violence in some legal areas, we respectfully submit that the law and legal procedures on family violence in Alberta are in need of reform. More specifically, we submit that the definitions of “family violence” in the *Family Law Act* and *Protection Against Family Violence Act* should be broadened to include coercive control, emotional and financial abuse, and children’s direct and indirect exposure to family violence, and to remove the exemption of corrective force against children. These amendments would align with modern understandings of family violence and contribute to access to legal remedies for survivors of violence.

We also respectfully submit that the government should reconsider its [decision to reject the conditions for federal funding support for Unified Family Courts \(UFCs\) in this province](#). UFCs would contribute to a specialized judiciary better placed to handle cases involving family violence and would enhance access to justice for survivors of family violence.

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