



**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

CHRISTOPHER T. SUNUNU
Governor

July 28, 2020

Governor's Veto Message Regarding House Bill 1660

By the authority vested in me, pursuant to part II, Article 44 of the New Hampshire Constitution, on July 28th, 2020, I have vetoed House Bill 1660.

It is incredibly disappointing that after two years of hard work, I have not yet received legislation to establish a protective order for vulnerable adults that the people of our State can support. The Department of Justice and my office have dedicated many hours of time and effort working with a diverse group of stakeholders to design legislation that accomplishes the goal of protecting vulnerable adults while avoiding unintended consequences. Despite multiple meetings convened by my office and assistance from my staff in drafting language, the stakeholders were unable to agree on a compromise amongst themselves or one that the people of our state could support.

First, while HB 1660 does address some of the concerns from a similar bill that was vetoed last year, it still leaves open a serious and real possibility that victims of domestic violence could inadvertently obtain the wrong protective order that leaves them with fewer protections from their abusers. Rather than exempting domestic violence victims from eligibility for this order to remove the possibility of confusion, as both I and the Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence requested, the bill creates a "worksheet" for victims to fill out to determine if this order adequately addresses their situation. The last thing a victim of domestic violence needs to be dealing with as they are experiencing a traumatic situation is bureaucratic paperwork.

My administration has worked long and hard to enhance protections for victims of domestic violence, including signing two bills into law this year that strengthen these protections. The provisions of this bill would complicate and potentially undermine those positive steps. We cannot let that happen.

Second, the legislation would permit a court to enter a temporary order with or without actual notice to the person against whom the order is being sought. This and other provisions could lead to violations of an individual's rights under the 2nd, 4th, 5th, and 14th Amendments to the United States Constitution, as well as similar provisions within the New Hampshire Constitution.

These concerns were raised repeatedly in the work my office engaged in with legislators and advocates. Unfortunately, our attempts to find a compromise were rejected.

For the reasons stated above, I have vetoed House Bill 1660.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris T. Sununu".

Christopher T. Sununu
Governor