Kentucky can...
Promote the well-being and financial stability of survivors of domestic violence and stalking and their children

Domestic violence is defined as a systematic pattern of behaviors used by one person to gain and maintain power and control over their intimate partner. It can take many forms, including isolation, intimidation, threatening to take the children or to commit suicide, withholding access to finances, or physical assault among many others.

In 2020, Kentucky had nearly 17,000 child victims of abuse or neglect and over 50% had family violence as a risk factor, both of which are defined as Adverse Childhood Experiences. Children who witness domestic violence, or are victims of abuse themselves, are at serious risk for physical and mental health issues that can last a lifetime.

Employment and financial independence are critical for survivors of domestic violence to be able to support themselves and their children. Unfortunately, for most people in abusive relationships, financial abuse creates barriers that can mean the difference between remaining in (or returning to) an abusive relationship and leaving for their children’s and their own safety.

In a national study of survivors of intimate partner violence, 83% experienced disruptions at work caused by their abusers. Of that group:

- 70% couldn’t get a job when they wanted or needed one
- 53% lost their job because of the abuse
- 49% missed at least one day of work
- 18% missed out on a promotion or raise

Kentucky can take important steps to remove barriers to permanently leaving an abusive relationship

- Ensure that victims of intimate partner violence, sexual assault, and stalking are not disqualified from unemployment insurance benefits if their reason for not working is directly related to their experience of abuse, assault, or stalking.
- Through confidential documentation by police or court records, a sworn statement, or other documentation, survivors of domestic violence should be able to access these short-term benefits as they find safety and stability for themselves and their children.

Blueprint for Kentucky’s Children Policy Solution:

Ensure survivors of intimate partner violence can access unemployment insurance benefits if their reason for not working is directly related to the violence, assault, or stalking

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