

**MEDINA COUNTY COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
DOMESTIC RELATIONS DIVISION
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Subject: New Law Authorizes “Dating Violence” Civil Protection Orders

A little over a week ago, Ohio House Bill 1, which allows a person in a ‘dating relationship’ to seek to a dating violence civil protection order, went into effect. “The legislature recognized a gap in the law, and crafted the new law to fill that gap,” said Judge Mary Kovack. “The new law went into effect on Friday, and by Monday, we already had our first dating violence civil protection order case.”

The new law provides certain protections for those who are in a ‘dating relationship’ and who are victims of dating violence or who are in danger of dating violence. As with domestic violence civil protection orders, petitions for a dating violence civil protection order must be filed with the Medina County Domestic Relations Court.

Before the new law went into effect, Judge Kovack had the ability to issue protection orders only for *family or household members*, such as: spouses, parents, children, siblings, or cohabitants in a relationship akin to a marriage. Now, a person who is the victim of dating violence may petition Judge Kovack for a dating violence civil protection order, regardless of whether she or he is a family or household member.

To this end, in the fall of 2017, Judge Kovack was awarded a \$699,991 federal grant through the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women. The grant provides for: a dedicated domestic violence magistrate, who will hear all dating violence civil protection order cases; increased services provided by Community Legal Aid to eligible Medina County families who are affected by domestic violence; expanded services at the Domestic Relations Court’s Gift Exchange Center; and, a “family justice victim advocate”, who will support and assist families affected by domestic violence as their cases make their way through the justice system.
