

## **THE CIVIL PROTECTION ORDER (CPO) HEARING**

You must come to D.C. Superior Court for the Civil Protection Order hearing once you have been served with the Petition and the Notice of Hearing and Order to Appear. If you do not appear to the hearing, the Court may:

**Grant the Civil Protection Order AND issue a warrant for your arrest.**

### **You must follow these steps on the day of the hearing:**

**Step 1:** Bring all of the information the judge will need to understand what happened, including text messages, videos, photos, receipts, and witnesses (people who saw what happened).

**Step 2:** Come to D.C. Superior Court, 500 Indiana Ave., NW, First Floor, at 8:30 a.m. Check the Notice of Hearing and Order to Appear for the Courtroom number.

**Step 3:** Check-in with the clerk standing by the podium and laptop outside the courtroom. After checking-in you will be directed to the courtroom.

**Step 4:** Any violation of a Temporary Protection Order (TPO) or Civil Protection Order (CPO) may result in your arrest or you being held in Contempt of Court. Therefore, you are not to have any contact or communication with the petitioner in or around the court building if the TPO/CPO prohibits it. This may include communication through third parties (i.e. relatives or friends delivering a message from you).

**Step 5:** Wait for an Attorney-Negotiator, who works with the court, to call your name and meet with you and the petitioner separately. They will go over the court process, find out what the parties want, and draft the proposed order. **They do not represent either side.** You may want to present your evidence to the Attorney Negotiator as it may affect the outcome of the negotiation.

### **After talking with the Attorney-Negotiator, you can:**

- ▶ **Consent (with or without admissions)** to the Civil Protection Order. The conditions in the Civil Protection Order may be negotiated through the Attorney-Negotiator.
- ▶ **Ask for a Continuance** to give you time to get an attorney and/or gather evidence.
- ▶ **Request a trial:** If you request a trial, **it will be held that day.** You do not have the right to a court-appointed attorney. At the Civil Protection Order hearing, you will be asked to tell the judge what happened. This will be your opportunity to present all the information you brought

and to explain your side of the situation. You can also seek free legal assistance or you can hire an attorney.

▶ **Answer:** You can file a written response to the allegations in the petition in the DV Division Clerks' Office located in Room 4510. That filing is called an Answer.

### **COMMON ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN CPO TRIALS**

#### **Is there a related case? If YES:**

- ▶ Please **share** that information with the Attorney Negotiator.

#### **Is there a request for child support in this case? If YES:**

- ▶ **Read** the Notice of Hearing and Order to Appear that was given to you with the Petition.
- ▶ Bring **all** documents listed in the notice (for example: paystubs, tax returns, etc.).

#### **Were there witnesses? If YES:**

- ▶ Bring the people who saw what happened.
- ▶ Bring the people who heard what was said.

#### **Were you injured? If YES:**

- ▶ Bring pictures showing your injuries.
- ▶ Bring documents from a doctor or hospital.

#### **Was your property damaged or destroyed? If YES:**

- ▶ Bring pictures showing any damage to your property.
- ▶ Bring receipts showing how much you paid for the damaged or destroyed property and when it was purchased.
- ▶ Bring estimates of the cost to replace or repair the property.

#### **Did you receive voicemails, text messages, or e-mails? If YES:**

- ▶ Bring copies of text messages and e-mails.
- ▶ Bring any voice mail messages.
- ▶ Bring copies of photographs and social media information (such as pictures and/or postings).