
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 1170 Session of
2020

INTRODUCED BY LANGERHOLC, BARTOLOTTA, J. WARD, MASTRIANO,
STEFANO, KILLION, PHILLIPS-HILL, BREWSTER, MUTH, TARTAGLIONE,
COSTA AND HUGHES, MAY 28, 2020

REFERRED TO JUDICIARY, MAY 28, 2020

AN ACT

1 Amending Title 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedure) of the
2 Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in depositions and
3 witnesses, further providing for expert testimony in certain
4 criminal proceedings.

5 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
6 hereby enacts as follows:

7 Section 1. Section 5920(a)(1) and (b)(1) of Title 42 of the
8 Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes are amended and the section
9 is amended by adding a subsection to read:

10 § 5920. Expert testimony in certain criminal proceedings.

11 (a) Scope.--This section applies to all of the following:

12 (1) A criminal proceeding for an offense for which
13 registration is required under [Subchapter H] Subchapters H
14 and I of Chapter 97 (relating to registration of sexual
15 offenders).

16 * * *

17 (b) Qualifications and use of experts.--

18 (1) In a criminal proceeding subject to this section, a

1 witness may be qualified by the court as an expert if the
2 witness has specialized knowledge beyond that possessed by
3 the average layperson based on the witness's experience with,
4 or specialized training or education in, criminal justice,
5 behavioral sciences or victim services issues, related to
6 sexual violence or domestic violence, that will assist the
7 trier of fact in understanding the dynamics of sexual
8 violence or domestic violence, victim responses to sexual
9 violence or domestic violence and the impact of sexual
10 violence or domestic violence on victims during and after
11 being assaulted.

12 * * *

13 (c) Definitions.--As used in this section, the term
14 "domestic violence" means an offense under 18 Pa.C.S. § 2701
15 (relating to simple assault), 2702 (relating to aggravated
16 assault) or 2718 (relating to strangulation) perpetrated against
17 a family or household member, as that term is defined in 23
18 Pa.C.S. § 6102 (relating to definitions).

19 Section 2. This act shall take effect in 60 days.