



Victims fight for stalker tracking bill

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INDIANAPOLIS | When Erica Liechty separated from her husband last summer he stalked her for weeks, she said, before shooting her in the face and back and turning the gun on himself.

On Tuesday, the Plymouth, Ind., woman went before the Indiana House Judiciary Committee to plead for a proposed state law allowing people who violate orders of protection to be tracked using electronic ankle bracelets.

"It puts some teeth into the protective order," said Erica's father, Brian Liechty. "It provides some punishment and a sense of safety."

House Bill 1578, sponsored by state Rep. Nancy Dembowski, D-Knox, would allow the state parole board or a judge to prescribe GPS tracking devices for offenders deemed a stalking threat.

Illinois last year became the 12th state to adopt such a law after lobbying by the friends and family of Cindy Bischof. The Arlington Heights, Ill., real estate broker, who did substantial work in Northwest Indiana, was slain last March by an unstable ex-boyfriend.

"We really firmly believe we're at a tipping point where the carryover effect, the momentum, will lead other states to take notice," said Cindy's brother, Michael Bischof, who testified Tuesday in Indianapolis.

Dembowski plans to offer an amendment clarifying that the electronic monitoring only is intended for those who already have violated an order of protection. The committee is expected to vote on the legislation next week.

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