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Bill on domestic violence pins a legal label on abusers; LD 1627 takes a range of crimes and rightly defines them as domestic violence.

A bill sponsored by Senate President Beth Edmonds, LD 1627, is a commendable measure that takes an innovative legal tack on domestic violence.

At present, there are many crimes that are considered, but not legally lumped together, as falling in the domain of domestic violence. Those crimes include criminal threatening, terrorizing, kidnapping, property destruction, trespassing, possession of prohibited weapons and violation of a protective order.

At present, when such crimes are committed in the home or against family members, they are prosecuted as terrorizing, criminal threatening, kidnapping, and so on. Labeled in that way, the crimes tend to lose some of the connection to the trauma that is domestic violence.

Any violence or abuse is objectionable, but domestic violence is particularly egregious. Home and family are the building blocks of civil individuals and a stable society, but domestic abuse is like an insidious disease that can play out over a lifetime and often into following generations.

LD 1627, however, takes an aggressive stance. A series of malevolent phone calls or an assault on a family member would no longer be prosecuted as just criminal threatening or assault – they would also be legally considered as “domestic violence.”

Under the bill, those convicted of DV crimes would have a record that better indicates a criminal history that too often represents a pattern of abusive behavior.

Establishing that pattern with a new legal definition would also be of use to law enforcement officers, helping them to better identify a potential threat.

LD 1627 legally connects the dots of criminal acts and “names the crime,” as one advocate has argued. It deserves passage into law.