



Work Without Fear:
The State of Employment Protections for Survivors
MAY 6, 2026 @ 12PM PDT / 3PM EDT

Event Questions and Answers

As part of our *Work Without Fear* webinar, international employment rights expert and law professor, [Robin Runge](#), responded to participant questions. The questions and answers are now made available for those who were not able to attend. [A recording of the webinar is also available.](#)

Q: When these laws refer to "survivors," does this include survivors of labor trafficking?

A: I am not aware of any of these laws that Bella (the event facilitator) is referencing naming survivors of labor trafficking specifically, however, states may have employment laws prohibiting discrimination against survivors of labor trafficking which I am not aware of. I would also just note that these laws all define domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking and some of those definitions may include the experiences of survivors of labor trafficking.

Q: Does the abuse have to be physical abuse?

A: It depends on the state law. These state laws include a definition of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking from their state civil or criminal laws.

Q: Are these state laws limited to employers who have over a certain number employees?

A: Yes! Great question. It is important to look at your state's law to see what size employers are covered and which employees are covered.



Work Without Fear:
The State of Employment Protections for Survivors
MAY 6, 2026 @ 12PM PDT / 3PM EDT

Event Questions and Answers

Q: If our states don't have laws indicated in the map, is this training relevant for us?

A: This training is still relevant. You may be interested in learning about what is available to bring to your state or you may have other anti-discrimination or leave laws that survivors may be able to access as employees.

Q: Do you know of training offered or information on existing or developing union or industry specific prevention programs?

A: Yes! FUTURES provides training and support for workplace prevention programs. Please check the resources at www.workplacesrespond.org.

Q: Are there best practices or model language that you have seen for anti-discrimination protections or reasonable accommodations?

A: FUTURES' co-hosts a national paid safe leave working group that has developed some helpful language on [the need for paid safe leave](#), and model [documentation and confidentiality requirements](#).

Q: If we don't have a particular protection in our state, what is recommended for how advocates should approach advocating on behalf of survivors with the survivor's employers? Is it recommended to do so?

A: Great question. FUTURES has several wonderful resources to assist advocates in approaching employers which can be found here: <https://workplacesrespond.org/>. In addition, FUTURES can provide you with technical assistance - [complete this form to request support](#).

Work Without Fear:
The State of Employment Protections for Survivors
MAY 6, 2026 @ 12PM PDT / 3PM EDT

Event Questions and Answers

Q: Do unemployment laws apply to those who have been out of the abusive situation for several years but have ongoing physical limitations, or do unemployment laws only come into play for a recently left position?

A: To access unemployment insurance benefits an individual must meet both eligibility requirements and must qualify. In the states that Bella mentioned one of the qualifying reasons for accessing UI benefits is status as a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking. So, it depends on the state. I encourage you to click on the links to the [Legal Momentum](#) and FUTURES' resources in the chat to find the information for your state.

Q: I wonder if there is a way that employers can be reimbursed at a later date by the victims compensation program. Does this already exist or is it even an option?

A: Interesting! I am not aware of any program like that at this time.

Q: Can survivors who are undocumented also benefit from these laws?

A: It depends. Under most employment laws, eligibility is limited to those who are employees as defined under state and federal law. Most federal and state laws do not define employees as citizens, so the protections do extend to employees who are undocumented. Exercising rights as an undocumented individual has unique risks. Anyone considering accessing their rights should consult with an attorney. Undocumented employees generally cannot access unemployment insurance as their undocumented status means they do not meet one of the eligibility requirements.



Work Without Fear:
The State of Employment Protections for Survivors
MAY 6, 2026 @ 12PM PDT / 3PM EDT

Event Questions and Answers

Q: How does it work for "at-will employment" states (such as Florida) and how should a client address when they are fired b/c they had "too much court"?

A: The baseline for employment law in the U.S. is at-will employment including in Florida. These laws provide at-will employees with these protections under state law. As described in the resources provided in the chat, Florida has a law that provides unpaid leave from work for survivors under Fla. Stat. Section 741.313 and leave under Fla. Stat. Section 92.57. I would see if the reasons why they are missing work to go to court are addressed by these laws.

Q: Is this different when the abuse occurs within the workplace?

A: Great question. These laws provide these protections regardless of where the domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking occurred. However, if the abuse took place at work there may be additional employment laws implicated so it is important to speak with an attorney.

Q: Could I please find out what organizations and states are providing ongoing training for judges on the dynamics of DV and trauma please? Thank you!

A: This is beyond the scope of this webinar, but yes, many organizations and states provide ongoing training for judges on the dynamics of domestic violence. You can check out [this organization for more information](#).



Work Without Fear:
The State of Employment Protections for Survivors
MAY 6, 2026 @ 12PM PDT / 3PM EDT

Event Questions and Answers

Q: Do these laws include adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse who may need to take time off to get services related to the abuse? Or only abuse that has recently occurred while they were employed?

A: Great question! It depends. Each state law defines domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking in the laws Bella is describing so you need to check the state law and see if the definition includes the specific circumstances you are describing. In general, these laws do not require that the abuse has taken place recently or while employed by a specific employer.

Q: Does NJ have a leave toolkit for survivors?

A: Great question! I am not sure - I am not aware of one but that doesn't mean it doesn't exist. If you feel comfortable reaching out to [Bella](#) directly, she would be the person whom I think would know.

Q: Does this mean that in NYS, employees with no safe and sick time accruals will apply for NYS Short-term disability?

A: I am not sure about the qualifications for short term disability in NYS. I encourage you to reach out to Legal Momentum which has lawyers based in NYC who can provide you with assistance answering this question if the employee is a survivor:

- Phone: 1(800)-649-0297
- Email: Help@LMHelpline.org
- Website/Form: legalmomentum.org/get-help-form



Work Without Fear:
The State of Employment Protections for Survivors
MAY 6, 2026 @ 12PM PDT / 3PM EDT

Event Questions and Answers

Q: How do you justify this tool [referring to FUTURES' development of an AI Chatbot], and the devastating ecological impacts of AI and data centers, with the connections we know exist between environmental disasters and marginalized communities and survivors? (Answered by FUTURES Staff)

A: We agree that unregulated AI brings a number of concerns, including impacts on women and marginalized communities. That's why we are exploring ethical AI partners and parameters. Our current partner, [Uplevyl](#) has strong ethical and privacy protections in place and is building tools specifically to meet women's needs. They are also part of the [United Nations Global Compact](#) (UNGC), which commits them to aligning strategies and operations with universal principles on human rights, labor, environment, and anti-corruption.

Q: What are the privacy protections specifically to this type of AI tool? (Answered by FUTURES Staff)

A: Uplevyl chose to opt in to the strictest data privacy standards in the world, with their data centers being hosted in Switzerland. This decision was Uplevyl's way of saying that the women who use this system, whether they are advocates or survivors or anyone who touches this knowledge layer, deserve to have their safety and privacy protected by structure, not just by internal organizational policy.