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***Ruiz v. Carrasco, Nos. 98-FM-39, 98-FM-40 (D.C. 1998)***

Legal Momentum assisted in drafting, editing and coordinating an amicus brief submitted to the D.C. Court of Appeals defending the trial court's discretion to include in the civil protection order (CPO) granted to Wendy Carrasco, a battered immigrant, an order prohibiting her abusive spouse, Antonio Ruiz, from contacting federal agencies with regard to Carrasco's immigration status. Carrasco was repeatedly beaten and abused during her marriage to Ruiz, a U.S. citizen. Ruiz's abuse included threats to undermine or interfere with her ability to attain legal immigration status. Carrasco sought and received a CPO after a contested hearing. The judge ordered that Ruiz be: (1) prohibited from contacting federal agencies with regard to Carrasco's immigration status except for emergencies, (2) allowed to testify before INS only if subpoenaed, and (3) required to receive prior court approval before any contact with a government office regarding Carrasco. On appeal, Ruiz contested the court's decision on two grounds. First, he claimed that Carrasco's CPO was granted based upon exaggerated accounts of domestic violence. Second, he claimed that orders granted under the catch-all provision of the D.C. statute regulating his contact with federal organizations was issued in violation of his constitutional right to free speech. Legal Momentum's amicus brief was completed and filed in the D.C. Court of Appeals and the case was set for oral argument. The day before the oral argument was to take place, Mr. Ruiz withdrew his appeal and the case was dismissed. The amicus brief developed in this case will be very useful to others attempting to receive orders from trial courts instructing abusers not to interfere with a battered immigrant's immigration case. Legal Momentum plans to make this brief available to other victims seeking similar relief in protection order cases.