



BILL NO: House Bill 670
TITLE: Police Reform and Accountability Act of 2021
COMMITTEE: Judiciary Committee
HEARING DATE: February 9, 2021
POSITION: SUPPORT

The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) is the state domestic violence coalition that brings together victim service providers, allied professionals, and concerned individuals for the common purpose of reducing intimate partner and family violence and its harmful effects on our citizens. **MNADV urges the House Judiciary Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 670.**

Domestic violence remains one of the most underreported crimes with almost 600,000 unreported incidents of nonfatal domestic violence victimizations occurring each year between 2006-2015.¹ It is estimated that women in approximately 40% of police officer families experience Officer Involved Domestic Violence (OIDV).² In OIDV cases, a victim might not seek the help of the police because their abuser is a police officer.³ There are many reasons why a victim of domestic violence does not seek the assistance of law enforcement and lack of faith and trust in the police and their response to domestic violence is one of them.

While domestic violence impacts people regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and socio-economic status, it disproportionately impacts women and men of color. Studies show that 45.1% of Black women and 40.1% of Black men have experienced intimate partner physical violence, intimate partner sexual violence or intimate partner stalking in their lifetimes.⁴ Further, 31.8% of Black women and 16.8% of Black men have experienced one or more of the following intimate partner violence-related impacts: being fearful, concerned for safety, any post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms, injury, need for medical care, housing services, victim advocate services, and/or legal services, missed at least 1 day of work or school, and contacting

¹ Brian A. Reaves, Ph.D., *Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police Response To Domestic Violence, 2006-2015*, 2017, https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=5907&utm_source=juststats&utm_medium=email&utm_content=prdv0615_report_detail_page&utm_campaign=prdv0615&ed2f26df2d9c416fbddddd2330a778c6=lohfkfgfkz-lktztdoo

² Rifaqat Cheema, *Black and Blue Bloods: Protecting Police Officer Families from Domestic Violence*, 54 Fam. Ct. Rev. 487, 489 (2016).

³ *Id.*

⁴ National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, *Domestic Violence and the Black Community*, https://assets.speakcdn.com/assets/2497/dv_in_the_black_community.pdf

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a crisis hotline.⁵ Domestic violence against immigrant women is believed to be almost three times the national average.⁶

In a 2015 ACLU survey examining why victims of domestic and sexual violence do not call the police, 88% of victims of domestic violence or sexual assault reported that police “sometimes” or “often” do not believe victims or blamed victims for the violence.⁷ In that same survey, 83% of the those surveyed thought police “sometimes” or “often” do not take allegations of sexual assault and domestic violence seriously.⁸ Over 80% believed that police-community relations with marginalized communities influenced survivors’ willingness to call the police.⁹

Greater transparency and training can help build trust between the police and victims of domestic violence, in particular the victims that are part of already marginalized communities. HB 670 requires testing and training for implicit biases, mental health screenings, an independent investigative agency for alleged shootings involving police officers or serious injuries or death caused by use of force of an officer, de-escalation and less-lethal force training, and an open and transparent disciplinary process. All these necessary reforms are critical for survivors of domestic violence, especially survivors of color, so that they can confidently seek help from the police when needed.

For the above stated reasons, the **Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence urges a favorable report on HB 670.**

⁵ 5 Breiding, M.J., Smith, S.G., Basile, K.C., Walters, M.L., Chen, J., & Merrick, M.T. (2014). Prevalence and characteristics of sexual violence, stalking, and intimate partner violence victimization — national intimate partner and sexual violence survey, United States, 2011. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report: Surveillance Summaries*, 63(8), 1-18.

⁶ Dutton, M., Molina, R. and Young, L. (2015). Evidence of Coercive Control: Proof of Extreme Cruelty in Immigration Cases and Power and Control Dynamics in Family Law Cases. [online] National Immigrant Women's Advocacy Project. Available at: <http://library.niwap.org/wp-content/uploads/Powerpoint-Evidence-ofCoercive-Control-Proof-of-Extreme-Cruelty-in-Immigration-Cases-and-Power-and-Control-Dynamics-in-FamilyLaw-Cases.pdf>

⁷ ACLU, [*Responses from the Field: Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, and Policing*](#), 2015.

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ *Id.*



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