



ANTHONY B. COVINGTON

State's Attorney for Charles County

January 25, 2022

Maryland House Judiciary Committee
Luke Clippinger, *Chair*
House Office Building, Room 101
Annapolis, MD 21401 – 1991

Re: Favorable Report for House Bill 153; Repeal of Spousal Defense

Dear Chairman Clippinger and Members of the Committee:

A marriage license is not a bill of sale, a deed or any other document that indicates ownership over a spouse. One spouse does not lose their autonomy over their own body merely because they're married. Maryland's spousal defense, however, seems to indicate otherwise and grants one spouse the ability to sexually assault their spouse without legal repercussions. No other relationship in Maryland is afforded the right to sexually assault a loved one without legal repercussions, not a parent, a boyfriend, a girlfriend nor any other family member.

The spousal defense harkens back to a past where a wife was deemed property and should not exist in the Maryland of today. I urge a favorable return of this bill.

Thank you,

K.A. Marsh

Kathryn A. Marsh

Special Victims Liaison, Assistant State's
Attorney