



BILL NO: House Bill 274
TITLE: Intercepted Communications - Penalty
COMMITTEE: Judiciary
HEARING DATE: January 30, 2024
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 274.**

Maryland requires the consent of every party to a phone call or conversation to make a recording lawful. Currently, a violation of the wiretap law is a felony and subject to punishment including imprisonment for not more than 5 years or a fine of not more than \$10,000, or both.

HB 274 would reclassify a violation of the wiretap law from a felony to a misdemeanor. MNADV supports a victim's ability to use a recording of the violence they suffered in court proceedings. Currently it is a felony for a victim, including victims of domestic violence, to record and document the abuse and violence they experienced and use it to obtain relief from the courts. HB 274 is an important attempt to remediate Maryland's wiretap laws.

For the above stated reasons, the **Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence urges a favorable report on HB 274.**