



TESTIMONY FOR SB0743
Family Law - Protective Orders - Crimes of Violence and Stalking

Bill Sponsor: Senator Waldstreicher

Committee: Judicial Proceedings

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, co-chair

Position: **FAVORABLE**

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0743 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of individuals and grassroots groups with members in every district in the state with well over 30,000 members.

SB0743 adds stalking to the list of offenses for which an individual may petition for a protective order and expands the circumstances for permanent protective orders.

Stalking can have negative consequences for the victim's physical and mental health, such as pain, injury, chronic disease, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Stalking can also escalate to physical violence, sexual assault, or murder.

Victims who are subjected to stalking live in almost-constant fear. They never know when, where or how an abuser might appear. Victims who move to a secure location for safety purposes or who change their routines in order to avoid their abusers are left to wonder if their new location is truly safe. These victims only hope may be protective orders against their stalker.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.