

**DVCC Letter of SB Support Strangulation CICB.pdf**

Uploaded by: Brett Engler

Position: FAV



The Honorable William Smith & Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
11 Bladen Street, Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairperson Smith and Judicial Proceedings Committee,

The Frederick County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC) writes in support of Senate Bill 398: Criminal Injuries Compensation Board – Victims of Nonfatal Strangulation. The Frederick County DVCC is a multidisciplinary public commission, formed in 2020, to increase collaboration and communication among criminal and civil justice stakeholders, service providers, and community members with the goal of reducing and preventing domestic violence in Frederick County.

The DVCC is in support of Senate Bill 398 because Maryland must support survivors of non-fatal strangulation in getting potentially life-saving health care. In 2020, the General Assembly recognized the lethality of strangulation assaults by categorizing strangulation as a felony-level offense. Police officers, healthcare professionals and victims are increasingly aware of the severity of strangulation—both as a modality of harm, and as a predictor of future homicide. Proper medical care following a strangulation event includes a forensic examination and medical imaging—which many victims cannot afford and therefore are forced to forgo. This is an access barrier that keeps vulnerable victims from receiving life-saving medical care, critical resource-referral, and the proper collection of evidence necessary to support civil and criminal cases essential to survival.

We urge a favorable report on SB 398.

Brett Engler, Esq.  
Frederick County State's Attorney's Office  
Chair, Frederick County DVCC

**Final Support Letter - Bill SB 398.pdf**

Uploaded by: Callie Freenock

Position: FAV

The Honorable William Smith & Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
11 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairperson Smith and Judicial Proceedings Committee,

Frederick Health Hospital Forensic Nursing Services Team writes in support of SB 398, Criminal Injuries Compensation Board – Victims of Nonfatal Strangulation. I am the Forensic Services Patient Navigator and a licensed social worker in the state of Maryland. I work closely with forensic nurse examiners to provide care for victims of violence. Nonfatal strangulation continues to be one of the most pervasive acts of violence we encounter in the hospital setting due to the severity of the potential consequences. Many victims of nonfatal strangulation show no external signs of injury. However, the lack of visible injuries does not exclude internal and possibly life-threatening complications.

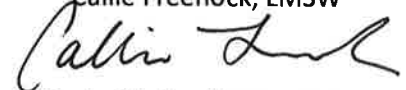
Nonfatal strangulation most often occurs in intimate partner relationships. Perpetrators use strangulation to exhibit power and control over the victim. The presence of domestic violence adds yet another layer of complexity to these cases. A victim seeking care may inadvertently be put into danger when a bill for that care is sent to the patient's residence. If a perpetrator is notified that a victim sought medical care, escalation of violence is likely to occur.

Perpetrators of nonfatal strangulation are more likely to commit future crimes, making it imperative that we increase access to evidence collection and injury documentation for all survivors. Research has made clear that perpetrators of nonfatal strangulation are more likely to kill police officers, to kill children, and to later kill their partners. Victims of nonfatal strangulation are 750% more likely to be killed by their intimate partner in the next year. We continue to see the rates of nonfatal strangulation increase. In the last fiscal year, 26.5% of all forensic patient encounters involved nonfatal strangulation.

In conjunction with a lack of visible injury, it is easy to see why victims would not seek medical care for fear of putting themselves in additional danger. The barriers of safety, financial responsibility, and lack of community education surrounding the consequences of strangulation often leads to victims being silenced. This bill would ensure that victims of nonfatal strangulation have access to the care they desperately need and deserve.

We urge a favorable report on SB 398.

Callie Freenock, LMSW



Frederick Health Hospital  
Forensic Services Patient Navigator

# **SB 398- Criminal Injuries Compensation Board- Vict**

Uploaded by: Jane Krienke

Position: FAV



Maryland  
Hospital Association

## **Senate Bill 398 - Criminal Injuries Compensation Board - Victims of Nonfatal Strangulation**

**Position: *Support***

February 1, 2024

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

### **MHA Position**

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 62 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of Senate Bill 398.

Across the state, hospital-based sexual assault forensic exam ([SAFE](#)) programs employ forensic nurse examiners. These registered nurses receive special training in evidence collection and are experts in delivering trauma-informed care to survivors of violence and abuse. State law ensures survivors of sexual assault have access to emergency medical treatment for their injuries with no out-of-pocket expense. Hospitals care for survivors of all forms of violence, but there are gaps in the state's reimbursement criteria. There is not a state-funded mechanism to reimburse the cost of providing an exam for survivors of nonfatal strangulation that is not associated with sexual assault or abuse. SB 398 would close this gap, benefiting many survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking.

Strangulation is classified as a "lethality factor" and can serve as a predictor of whether an individual is at greater risk of being killed or seriously injured.<sup>1</sup> In 2021, 58 Marylanders died as a result of intimate partner violence. Of those, 13 were abusive partners, five were bystanders including two children, and 37 were intimate partner victims of domestic violence. New technology can accurately document evidence of strangulation. For example, several Maryland hospitals have access to technology such as an "alternative light source" to detect fingerprints left on a victim's neck.

SB 398 would provide reimbursement and support so hospitals can continue to serve their communities and care for survivors of all forms of violence and abuse. In the case of non-fatal strangulation, supporting access to health care services at no cost to the victim could save lives.

For these reasons, we ask for a *favorable* report on SB 398.

For more information, please contact:

Jane Krienke, Senior Legislative Analyst, Government Affairs  
Jkrienke@mhaonline.org

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<sup>1</sup> Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence. "2021-2022 Maryland Domestic Violence Fatality Review State Implementation Team (MD-DVFRSIT). [MD-DVFRSIT 2021-2022 First Annual Report FINAL.pdf \(mnadv.org\)](#)

# **MLAW Testimony - SB398 - Criminal Injuries Compens**

Uploaded by: Jessica Morgan

Position: FAV



Bill No: SB398  
Title: Criminal Injuries Compensation Board - Victims of Nonfatal Strangulation  
Committee: Judicial Proceedings  
Hearing: February 1, 2024  
Position: SUPPORT

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The Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) is a statewide coalition of women's groups and individuals formed to provide a non-partisan, independent voice for Maryland women and families. MLAW's purpose is to advocate for legislation affecting women and families. To accomplish this goal, MLAW creates an annual legislative agenda with issues voted on by MLAW members and endorsed by organizations and individuals from all over Maryland. **SB398 - Criminal Injuries Compensation Board - Victims of Nonfatal Strangulation** is a priority on the [2024 MLAW Agenda](#) and we urge your support.

SB398 would require that non-fatal strangulation forensic examination expenses be paid for through the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board.

Current law requires the reimbursement for forensic examinations and other eligible expenses including emergency medical treatment and follow-up care for injuries resulting from an alleged rape, sexual assault, or child sexual abuse. Existing law does not require the reimbursement for forensic examinations, emergency medical care, or other eligible expenses for survivors of nonfatal strangulation that did not result from an alleged rape, sexual offense, or sexual abuse. The ability to pay for a forensic evaluation or medical treatment should not be a deterrent for a survivor of a non-fatal strangulation if seeking medical care. A woman who has suffered a non-fatal strangulation incident with her intimate partner is 750% more likely to be killed by the same perpetrator.

Strangulation is an indicator of lethality in domestic violence. After a strangulation attempt there are numerous medical risks that must be evaluated by a medical provider since most are invisible injuries including damage to the interior neck anatomy, lack of oxygenation, and an increased risk for strokes that can last for months after the assault. Every survivor of strangulation should seek medical attention due to the many and possible fatal consequences. 1 in 4 women have been victims of severe physical violence, including strangulation, by an intimate partner in their lifetime. Expanding the existing reimbursement law for forensic exams to include non-fatal strangulation that did not result from an alleged rape, sexual offense, or sexual abuse could save women's lives by removing financial barriers to seeking medical treatment in the immediate aftermath of the violence. When women seek medical treatment, they can also be connected to services which can include safety planning and hopefully prevent a future domestic violence fatality.

**For these reasons, MLAW strongly urges the passage of SB398.**

**Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women**  
102 W. Pennsylvania Avenue, Suite 100 • Towson, MD 21204 • 443-519-1005 phone/fax  
[mdlegagenda4women@yahoo.com](mailto:mdlegagenda4women@yahoo.com) • [www.mdlegagendaforwomen.org](http://www.mdlegagendaforwomen.org)



## MLAW 2024 Supporting Organizations

The following organizations have signed on in support of our 2024 Legislative Agenda\*:

1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East  
AAUW Anne Arundel County  
AAUW Garrett Branch  
AAUW Kensington-Rockville Branch  
AAUW Maryland  
Adolescent Single Parent Program (PGCPS)  
Anne Arundel County NOW  
Baltimore County Commission for Women  
Black Women for Positive Change, Baltimore Chapter  
Bound for Better, Advocates for Domestic Violence  
Child Justice, Inc.  
Church Women United, Inc.  
Climate XChange Maryland  
Court Watch Montgomery  
CTLDomGroup Inc  
DABS Consulting, LLC  
Engage Mountain Maryland  
Frederick County Commission for Women  
If/When/How at University of Baltimore School of Law  
Les Etoiles in Haiti  
Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault  
Maryland Legislative Coalition  
Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence  
Miller Partnership Consultants  
MomsRising  
Montgomery County NOW  
National Organization for Women, Maryland Chapter  
Prince George's County Public Schools  
Rebuild, Overcome, and Rise (ROAR) Center at University of MD, Baltimore  
REHarrington Plumbing and Heating  
Reproductive Justice Maryland  
Stella's Girls  
The Hackerman Foundation  
Top Ladies of Distinction Prince George's County  
TurnAround Inc.  
Women's Equity Center and Action Network (WE CAN)  
Women's Law Center of Maryland  
Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporate - Alpha Zeta Chapter  
Zonta Club of Annapolis

*\*sign-ons as of 1/23/24*

### **Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women**

**102 W. Pennsylvania Avenue, Suite 100 • Towson, MD 21204 • 443-519-1005 phone/fax  
[mdlegagenda4women@yahoo.com](mailto:mdlegagenda4women@yahoo.com) • [www.mdlegagendaforwomen.org](http://www.mdlegagendaforwomen.org)**

**SB 398 - WLCMD - FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Laure Ruth

Position: FAV

BILL NO: Senate Bill 398  
TITLE: Criminal Injuries Compensation Board - Victims of Nonfatal Strangulation  
COMMITTEE: Judicial Proceedings  
HEARING DATE: February 1, 2024  
POSITION: **SUPPORT**

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Among other things, Senate Bill 398 would require that non-fatal strangulation forensic examination expenses be paid for through the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. The Women's Law Center supports SB 398 because strangulation is an indicator of lethality in domestic violence.

Survivors of strangulation are 750% more likely to become a victim of domestic violence homicide. After a strangulation attempt there are numerous medical risks that must be evaluated by a medical provider since most are invisible injuries including damage to the interior neck anatomy, lack of oxygenation, and an increased risk for strokes that can last for months after the assault. SB 398 specifies that "strangulation" includes strangulation that is not related to rape, a sexual offense, or sexual abuse. This is important as not all nonfatal strangulation occurs in only sexual assaults or offenses. It is a common occurrence in non-sexual assault intimate partner violence.

Every survivor of a strangulation should seek medical attention, even when there is no immediate visible evidence of the strangulation. There are many and possible fatal consequences. The ability to pay for that evaluation should not be a barrier to treatment and that is what SB 398 addresses.

For these reasons, the Women's Law Center supports SB 398 and asks for a favorable report.

***The Women's Law Center of Maryland is a private, non-profit, legal services organization that serves as a leading voice for justice and fairness for women. It advocates for the rights of women through legal assistance to individuals and strategic initiatives to achieve systemic change, working to ensure physical safety, economic security, and bodily autonomy for women in Maryland.***

# **Strangulation - forensic exams - senate testimony**

Uploaded by: Lisae C Jordan

Position: FAV



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**Working to end sexual violence in Maryland**

P.O. Box 8782  
Silver Spring, MD 20907  
Phone: 301-565-2277  
Fax: 301-565-3619

For more information contact:  
Lisae C. Jordan, Esquire  
443-995-5544  
[www.mcasa.org](http://www.mcasa.org)

**Testimony Supporting Senate Bill 398**  
**Lisae C. Jordan, Executive Director & Counsel**  
February 1, 2024

The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA) is a non-profit membership organization that includes the State's seventeen rape crisis centers, law enforcement, mental health and health care providers, attorneys, educators, survivors of sexual violence and other concerned individuals. MCASA includes the Sexual Assault Legal Institute (SALI), a statewide legal services provider for survivors of sexual assault. MCASA represents the unified voice and combined energy of all of its members working to eliminate sexual violence. We urge the Judicial Proceedings Committee to report favorably on Senate Bill 398.

**Senate Bill 398 -- Forensic Exams – Non-Fatal Strangulation**

This bill adds non-fatal strangulation to the statute authorizing and requiring reimbursement for medical forensic exams involving rape, sexual offenses, and child sexual abuse. The evidence collected through these exams is crucial for the prosecution of these very serious crimes.

Nationally, there are extensive protocols for forensic exams specific to non-fatal strangulation.

<https://www.forensicnurses.org/page/STAssessment> MCASA fully supports expanding support for forensic exams to include non-fatal strangulation, both because this will increase detection of strangulation in sexual assault cases, and also to assist victims of strangulation unrelated to sexual violence.

The act of strangulation can be horrifying for victims and cause serious injury, negative future health consequences, or death. A common occurrence in intimate partner violence, studies show that strangulation co-occurs with sexual violence in 5 to 25% of cases but the act often goes undetected in sexual assault victims.

[https://www.pcar.org/sites/default/files/resourcepdfs/strangulation\\_and\\_sexual\\_violence\\_factsheet.pdf](https://www.pcar.org/sites/default/files/resourcepdfs/strangulation_and_sexual_violence_factsheet.pdf)

MCASA notes that significant federal funding is specific to sexual assault forensic exams; other funding is directed towards survivors of intimate partner violence. MCASA suggests working with agency staff administering criminal injuries compensation to ensure that Maryland is leveraging federal funding and to ensure that the important policy embodied in SB398 can be effectively implemented.

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges the  
Judicial Proceedings Committee to  
report favorably on Senate Bill 398**

**SB 398\_FAV\_MNADV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Melanie Shapiro

Position: FAV



**BILL NO:** Senate Bill 398  
**TITLE:** Criminal Injuries Compensation Board - Victims of Nonfatal Strangulation  
**COMMITTEE:** Judicial Proceedings  
**HEARING DATE:** February 1, 2024  
**POSITION:** **FAVORABLE**

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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 Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 398.**

Strangulation is an indicator of lethality in domestic violence. Survivors of strangulation are 750% more likely to become a victim of domestic violence homicide. After a strangulation attempt there are numerous medical risks that must be evaluated by a medical provider since most are invisible injuries including damage to the interior neck anatomy, lack of oxygenation, and an increased risk for strokes that can last for months after the assault. Every survivor of strangulation should seek medical attention due to the many and possibly fatal consequences. 1 in 4 women have been victims of severe physical violence, including strangulation, by an intimate partner in their lifetime.

Expanding the existing reimbursement law for forensic exams to include non-fatal strangulation that did not result from an alleged rape, sexual offense, or sexual abuse could save women's lives by removing financial barriers to seeking medical treatment in the immediate aftermath of the violence. When women seek medical treatment, they can also be connected to services which can include safety planning and hopefully prevent a future domestic violence fatality.

The Sexual Assault Reimbursement Unit is distinct from general victim compensation, and it does not require the use of medical insurance first. This is significant for victims of domestic violence who often do not seek medical care due to cost and fear that their abuser might be notified if they use medical insurance. The ability to pay for that evaluation should not be a barrier to treatment and that is what SB 398 addresses.

For the above stated reasons, the **Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence urges a favorable report on SB 398.**

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For further information contact Melanie Shapiro ■ Public Policy Director ■ 301-852-3930 ■ [mshapiro@mnadv.org](mailto:mshapiro@mnadv.org)

1997 Annapolis Exchange Parkway, Suite 300 ■ Annapolis, MD 21401  
Tel: 301-429-3601 ■ E-mail: [info@mnadv.org](mailto:info@mnadv.org) ■ Website: [www.mnadv.org](http://www.mnadv.org)