



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

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.

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

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