

HB0403_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

02/24/2026

Richard Keith Kaplowitz

Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON HB#/0403- POSITION: FAVORABLE

Public Information Act - Divorce Records

TO: Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr, and members of the Government, Labor and Elections Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#/0403, **Public Information Act - Divorce Records**

A report by the Rockefeller Institute of Government has found that intimate partner homicide (IPH), fatal incidents where a person is killed by a current or former intimate partner [are happening]. These incidents are different from other homicides in terms of their causes and effects, which are far-reaching even though they comprise a relatively small percentage of homicides overall. Women are [disproportionately the victims of IPH](#), with the majority (77.9 percent) of IPHs committed by men against women. In [heterosexual relationships](#), most female victims of IPH are killed by men who abused them and most male victims of IPH are killed by women that they abused.

IPHs generally follow a pattern of abuse escalation and there are often warning signs before the killing, making them one of the most preventable types of homicides. These incidents are seldom random acts of violence. ¹

A divorced person can petition to have their information withheld to protect themselves from potential stalking and violence from their former intimate partner. This bill states that a custodian shall release a record pertaining to a divorce proceeding to an applicant who:

- is a person in interest;
- is a lawyer representing a person in interest; or
- has been authorized under a court order to inspect the record.

The court can thus decide on what measures of protection apply to the records of a divorce and who and under what conditions they may be released or inspected.

This bill will require a custodian to deny inspection of certain records pertaining to a divorce proceeding; and requiring a custodian to release records pertaining to a divorce proceeding to certain applicants under certain circumstances.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#/0403.

¹ <https://rockinst.org/blog/understanding-and-addressing-intimate-partner-homicide/>