



Governor's Family Violence Council
100 Community Place, Crownsville, MD 21032

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Lieutenant Governor

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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 497

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Governor's Family Violence Council

The Governor's Family Violence Council urges your support for House Bill 497, which lengthens the time between a temporary protection order and final protection order hearing. It also would allow reimbursement of financial loss incurred by the petitioner (the victim), due to the respondent's acts. This bill aligns with the Governor's Family Violence Council's mission to reduce and eliminate abusive behaviors.

Current Maryland law requires a final protection order hearing seven days after the court grants a temporary protection order. HB 497 would extend the timeframe to 14 days, allowing law enforcement more time to serve the order. The extended time frame would also provide the victim time to deal with a myriad of needs, including moving or locating safe housing, receiving medical or mental health care, applying for public benefits, or seeking legal representation.

House Bill 497 would allow a court to order the respondent to pay the petitioner for any losses or expenses incurred as a direct result of the abuse. This would include medical, dental or mental health treatment costs, cost to repair or replace damaged property; food, temporary shelter, or relocation costs; transportation costs; filing fees and court costs; and reasonable attorney's fees.

This legislation strengthens protections for survivors and ensures accountability for abusers. By supporting House Bill 497, Maryland takes a crucial step in promoting safety for victims of abuse. For these reasons, the Governor's Family Violence Council urges a favorable report on House Bill 497.

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