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WOMEN LEGISLATORS OF MARYLAND
THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

February 11, 2026

To:

Delegate J. Sandy Bartlett, Chair

Delegate Debra Davis, Vice Chair

Judiciary Committee

The Maryland Women's Caucus proudly supports HB 497, Family Law – Temporary and Final Protective Orders – Duration and Relief.

HB 497 extends from 7 to 14 days the period during which a temporary protective order remains effective after service on the respondent and requires that a final protective order hearing be held no later than 14 days after service. The bill also authorizes a final protective order to require a respondent to pay certain losses or expenses incurred by an eligible person as a result of abuse.

This legislation strengthens protections for survivors of domestic violence by closing gaps that can leave victims vulnerable during critical transition periods. Extending the duration of temporary protective orders ensures continued safety while awaiting a final hearing and provides stability during a time of heightened risk.

The Maryland Women's Caucus is committed to advancing policies that protect survivors and hold abusers accountable. Financial abuse and economic harm often accompany physical and emotional abuse. Allowing courts to order compensation for losses or expenses resulting from abuse recognizes the real and lasting impact of violence and supports survivors in rebuilding their lives.

Timely hearings and meaningful relief are essential components of a responsive and survivor-centered legal system. HB 497 promotes accountability, enhances safety, and ensures that protective orders provide both immediate and practical support.

For these reasons, the Maryland Women's Caucus respectfully urges a favorable report on HB 497.