



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

ROCKVILLE: 240-777-6550

ANNAPOLIS: 240-777-8270

HB 233

DATE: January 28, 2020

SPONSOR: Delegate Pippy, *et al.*

ASSIGNED TO: Judiciary

CONTACT PERSON: Leslie Frey (leslie.frey@montgomerycountymd.gov)

POSITION: SUPPORT

Criminal Law – Assault in the First Degree – Suffocation or Strangulation

This bill expands the crime of felony first-degree assault to include the commission of an assault through the intentional suffocation or strangulation of another. A violator is subject to the existing statutory penalty for felony first-degree assault of imprisonment for up to 25 years.

In the last six months, rape, physical, and sexual assault victims in Montgomery County have overwhelmingly reported attempted strangulations when presenting to the emergency department, with 15 victims reporting attempted strangulation. Strangulation can result in damage to the interior neck anatomy, lack of oxygenation, and an increased risk for strokes that can last for months after the assault. Alarming, women are 750% more likely to be murdered subsequent to a strangulation attempt.

Montgomery County urges the Committee to move the bill favorably so Maryland can join 47 other states in classifying these crimes as felonies.