

# FREDERICK COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

## HEADQUARTERS FREDERICK COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT CENTER

110 Airport Drive East  
Frederick, Md. 21701  
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## JUDICIAL OPERATIONS

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Frederick, Md. 21701  
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**CHARLES A. JENKINS**  
SHERIFF

**DETENTION CENTER/  
CENTRAL BOOKING**  
7300 Marcie's Choice Lane  
Frederick, Md. 21704  
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**WORK RELEASE CENTER**  
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Frederick, Md. 21704  
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January 23, 2020  
CAJ/tah

Frederick County State's Attorney's Office  
Attention: Joyce King  
100 W. Patrick St.  
Frederick, MD 21701

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing today in support of legislation to make Strangulation a 1<sup>st</sup> degree assault charge (LR0812). According to research done through the Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention, domestic violence victims of strangulation are at a 750% increased risk of death as compared to domestic violence where strangulation is not present. Victims of domestic violence, health care providers, law enforcement, and even advocates are often unaware of how dangerous strangulation is. Many professionals often dismiss the strangulation assault because visible injuries are only present in 50% of the cases. However, the underlying, non-visible injuries (mental health and physical health) can present even more serious risks to the victim. Brain damage and/or death can occur within minutes and when not addressed medically, victims can die days and even weeks after the strangulation event.

When you have a situation as cold and calculated as a strangulation, the act is basically telling a victim of strangulation the offender has the capability to kill the victim at any time. It is used as a form of intimidation in a continuing relationship based off of control, power, and manipulation. Gwinn (2014) found, while more research is needed, "law enforcement officers killed in this country are killed by men with a history of domestic violence and men with a history of strangulation assault against women (p. 97). Additionally, I have had the opportunity to review police reports in which children are often witnesses to these events or have to intervene to save their parent's life. Strangulation victims feared they would be killed in front of their children. They often reiterate to police they believed they were going to die or would use their last breaths to warn their children to call 911.

Recognizing the seriousness of these events, a 1<sup>st</sup> degree assault charge in case of strangulation can increase the maximum penalty from up to 10 years of imprisonment to up to 25 years of imprisonment. Knowing the extreme dangers a victim faces in these cases, this affords a victim greater

protection and safety by increasing the penalties. The increased penalty could serve as a potential deterrent to offenders moving forward and could even assist with the safety of our law enforcement officers by taking these violent offenders off the street. Finally, the message to the victim of charging strangulation cases as a 1<sup>st</sup> degree felony assault tells victims we stand behind them and will do what we can to help protect them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles A. Jenkins". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Charles A. Jenkins  
Sheriff of Frederick County