



BILL NO: Senate Bill 281
TITLE: Comptroller - Online Payment Processing Portal
COMMITTEE: Education, Health and Environmental Affairs
HEARING DATE: February 17, 2022
POSITION: **SUPPORT**

The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) is the state domestic violence coalition that brings together victim service providers, allied professionals, and concerned individuals for the common purpose of reducing intimate partner and family violence and its harmful effects on our citizens. **MNADV urges the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 281.**

Survivors of domestic violence in Maryland receive support and services through organizations, many of whom are the recipients of grants of state and federal funds. Non-profit organizations are generally those that receive these grants and operate with limited resources. The state and federal grant dollars are relied upon for salary, benefits, and operational expenses. These grants enable non-profit organizations to provide shelter, counseling, advocacy, legal services and hotlines to victims and survivors of domestic violence in Maryland.

The Governor's Office of Crime Control, Youth, and Victim Services and other state agencies require that grant recipients front funds to use for grant activities and then the state provides reimbursement. Some grants use a monthly reimbursement schedule and others require that a full quarter of expenditures be made prior to reimbursement. Grant reimbursements are to be made within 30 days, but they frequently take far longer. This means, as an example, that a domestic violence service provider would expend payroll and other expenses for 3 months (one quarter), and then wait another 4 or 5 or more weeks for reimbursement. Maryland's non-profits have the same financial obligations as other small businesses including rent, payroll, health insurance for employees, and more.

SB 281 would bring greater transparency to the handling of invoices from vendors and organizations providing services for and on behalf of the state by creation of an online portal to track bills and invoices through the payment process. This would allow domestic violence non-profits to dedicate their attention to helping the victims and survivors they serve without worrying about their financial security and health.

For the above stated reasons, the **Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence urges a favorable report on SB 281.**

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